

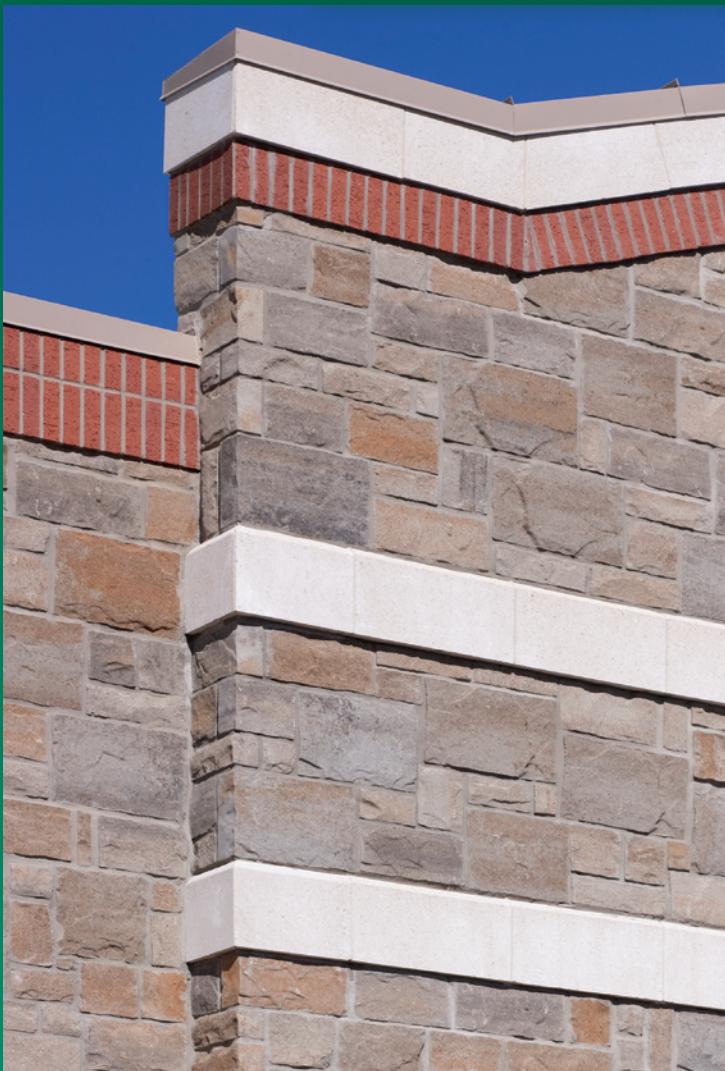
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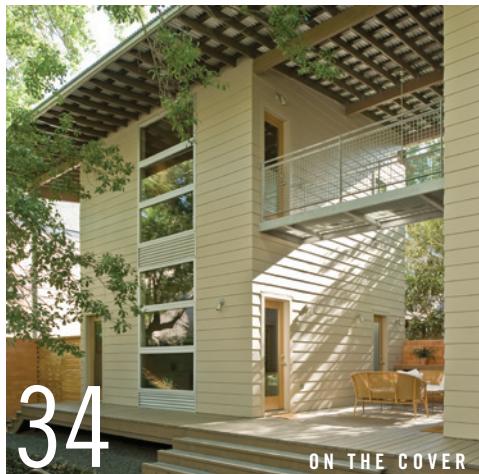


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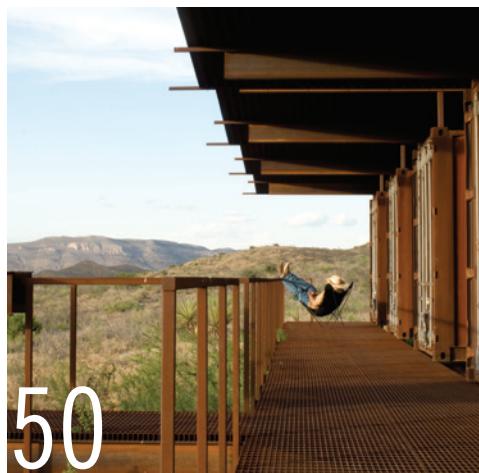
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# Thoughtful Editing

Rice students take professor's advice to heart with Solar Decathlon's Ze-Row

AS IS OFTEN THE CASE WITH *TA*'S THEMED EDITIONS, a bottomless well serves as an apt metaphor for this one. Selecting residential projects and housing-related topics proved to be a challenge because the options were abundant and the possibilities almost without bounds.

With this edition the staff presents a broad look at residential architecture that also touches on planning issues, affordable housing, preservation, and other ancillary aspects. Underlying all of the content, of course, is the common denominator of thoughtful design. Exemplary of that idea is the photo on the cover that effectively captures the highly refined work of Nonya Grenader, FAIA. Designed for herself and her husband, the Wroxton Residence in Houston is set perpendicular to the street, reminiscent of the Charleston antebellum site plans, with a long front porch facing a side garden. In her profile of the project (see "Building in 'Enough'" on p. 34), Val Glitsch, FAIA, quotes Grenader's advice to her architectural students at Rice University: "first establish a strong organization and then edit around it."

Thoughtful editing by graduate students at the Rice Building Workshop (led by Grenader and fellow faculty Danny Samuels, FAIA) has produced the Ze-Row: Zero Energy Rowhouse. The 800-sf building (shown above) is the only Texas entry in the 2009 Solar Decathlon, the biennial competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. Entries will be judged on 10 different criteria – a decathlon – after they are trucked to Washington, D.C., and displayed on the Mall in October. The Ze-Row project illustrates how Grenader's students have taken her advice to heart.

\*\*\*

Thoughtful editing has produced several wonderful books over the past year or two that spotlight residential architecture in Texas. A few have been reviewed in these pages, such as *The Country Houses of John F. Staub* by Stephen Fox and *Great Houses of Texas* by Lisa Germany. In this edition,

Fox considers *The Homes of the Park Cities, Dallas* by a triumvirate of authors that includes Willis Winters, FAIA (see "Neighbors" on p. 31); and Michael Malone, AIA, offers an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *The Architect's Guide to Residential Design* (see "So You Want to Do Houses?" on p. 22).

I am chagrined to admit that no review has run in this magazine of *Think Like an Architect* by Hal Box, FAIA. The book, published by University of Texas Press, is a very personal account divided into chapters crafted as letters to select friends, associates, and grandchildren that distill a career's worth of wisdom and enduring passion for thoughtful design. Box's narrative is comprehensive and heartfelt.

Another non-*TA*-reviewed book – *Spaced Out: Crash Pads, Hippie Communes, Infinity Machines, and Other Radical Environments of the Psychedelic Sixties* (Rizzoli, 2008) by Alastair Gordon – features two experimental dwellings built near Austin. In his book, Gordon flashes on scores of handmade houses that appeared like mushrooms in the loamy recesses of American counterculture, including the Earth House and the Bloomhouse, both by Tao Design Group. The collaborative was led by Charles Harker, who at the time taught architecture at UT Austin. Harker and his cohorts sculpted the 1-bed/1-bath Bloomhouse with concrete sprayed over framework of welded steel ribs and the process was chronicled in the May/June 1977 *Texas Architect*. Still standing and occupied in West Lake Hills, its curvilinear forms seem less designed than organically metamorphosed amongst the juniper on 2.47 wooded acres. Thoughtful editing, again, with a sensuous and astonishing result.

STEPHEN SHARPE

*Stephen Sharpe*

Lawrence Connolly, AIA



Gregory Ibañez, AIA



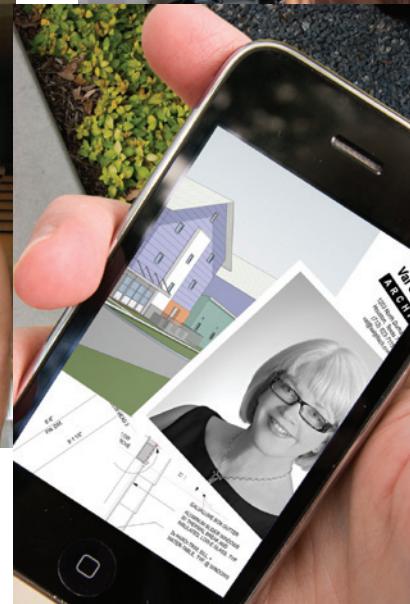
Urs Peter Flueckiger



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Val Glitsch, FAIA

**D R O R B A L D I N G E R , A I A** is originally from Tel Aviv, Israel, and graduated from Arizona State University in 1985. He has contributed to the San Antonio firm, Marmon Mok, since 1992, where he serves as the director of design. **G R E G O R Y I B A Ñ E Z , A I A** has been practicing in Texas since 1980 and is still looking forward to the time when we all have enough work to be busy, but not so much that we can't enjoy it. We can dream, can't we?

**L A W R E N C E C O N N O L L Y , A I A** is a long-time *TA* contributor. He has written over 40 articles since his first piece in the early 1990s, reflective of his passion for architecture and knowledge of Texas projects.

**M I C H A E L M A L O N E , A I A** Two down, two to go is the way Michael and Amy Malone view the recent graduation of their son Max. Between raising four children (Meredith, Max, Riley, and Carlie) and leading a design studio at

WKMC Architects, Malone is completing a book on residential design for McGraw Hill available this fall.

**U R S P E T E R F L U E C K I G E R** teaches and practices architecture in Lubbock where he is an associate professor at Texas Tech University. When he is not thinking architecture or playing with his family, he loves riding his motorcycle across the High Plains.

**V A L G L I T S C H , F A I A** As a sole practitioner in Houston, Glitsch has enjoyed being a part of Texas architecture on a larger scale through involvement with the TSA Publications Committee for the last 12 years. As a contributing editor for *TA* for the last three she has enjoyed tormenting *TA* Editor Stephen Sharpe with her excessive italics, hyphenated word-groups, and run-on sentences. 



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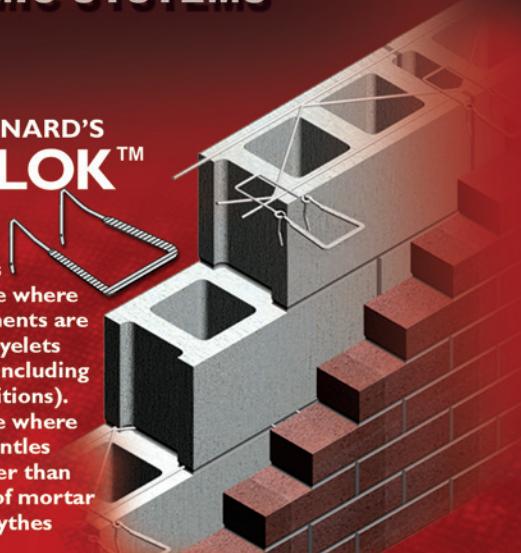


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## Stieren Center Beautifully Prof led

Many thanks for the marvelous piece on our new Stieren Exhibition Center at the McNay Art Museum. The article beautifully captures the museum's goals, as well as the innovative design and execution by the project team. The diligent and on-going input of the McNay staff, especially its director, Dr. William Chiego, was also essential to the success of the project.

Tom Semmes  
San Antonio

*The writer is an emeritus trustee of the McNay.*

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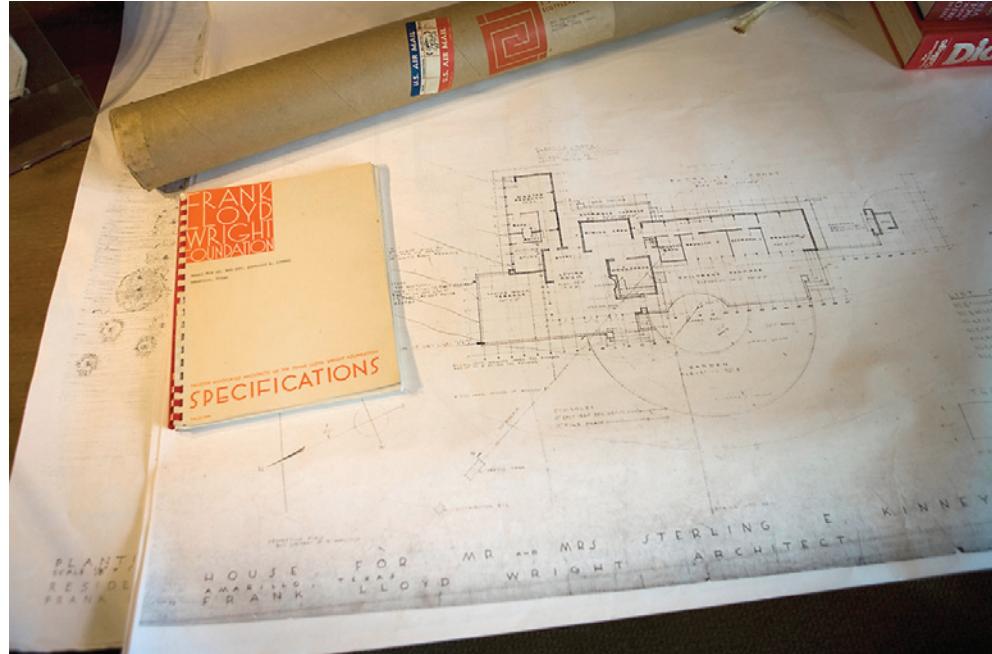


## Restored Usonian House in Amarillo Once Again Shows Wrightian Touch

**A M A R I L L O** Sterling and Dorothy Ann Kinney hired Frank Lloyd Wright in 1955 with the desire to build a home of "beauty and integrity" for the benefit of their three young daughters. Today, almost 50 years after construction was completed, their home, though of modest scale and material, stands as a testament to this aspiration. As one of only four Wright projects constructed in the state, the Kinney Residence is only minutes from downtown Amarillo.

The 2,000-sf Kinney Residence is a fine example of Wright's Usonian design. Its deep overhangs, common materiality, and full expression of light were fundamentals of this new American design. The Kinneys, particularly Dorothy Ann, followed Wright's career and had been enchanted by his published work. In a letter to Wright in 1957 following a visit to Taliesin East, she noted, "I can't decide whether you are an architect or a magician."

Wright died before the Kinney Residence was completed in 1960, but made one visit to the property during the design phase, observing the character of the site and locating the placement for the home. Construction was accomplished under the Taliesin Associated Architects and supervised by Allen Lape Davison. Set back from the highway, it pays no attention to the traffic. The private road approaches the house from the southeast. The carport, seen first, simultaneously provides the function of car storage and the sculptural quality common in Wright's angles of first impression. The terraces open to the west with views of the creek bed



(clockwise from top left) The modestly scaled Kinney Residence features some of the original furnishings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, including the curved sofa and dining table. As shown at the entry, red-brick walls are set at a 15-degree batter. The original owners retained the construction documents and the new owner displays copies that illustrate the underlying organization of the Usonian plan.

and mesas. Although the west facade is almost entirely glass, the mature trees provide strategic relief in the late afternoon.

In May 2004, Robin Weir purchased the property from the Kinney family and became its second owner. Although many potential buyers approached the family, Weir's commitment to delicate, authentic restoration convinced them that they had found a suitable successor.

The restoration process began almost immediately after Weir took possession. The Kinney

Residence was by no means dilapidated, but only a few years of deferred maintenance can deteriorate a home with such high demands. As would be expected, water damage to the roof and soffits had to be addressed along with the systematic removal of several decades worth of floor wax and cigarette smoke. There was surprisingly little damage to the brick walls and integral glass, confirming the Kinney's request

Continued on page 14

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## In Architectural About-Face at Fort Bliss, Army Plans 'Sense of Place' in the Desert

**E L P A S O** In earlier times, the planning philosophy of the U.S. military could be summarized as "three hots and a cot." That simplistic attitude left much to be desired in the way Army bases and other military installations were laid out and adapted as needs changed. However, at the sprawling outpost of Fort Bliss at the extreme western tip of Texas, the Army is currently building a small town with architecture that responds to the desert conditions.

The Fort Bliss Army Base spreads across approximately 1.1 million acres, or 1,760 square miles, of arid land within Texas and New Mexico. Its population in 2003 was estimated to be 127,133, with most living near El Paso. That population is expected to expand by about 70,000 new residents within a few years. That unprecedented growth is foreseen as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations approved by the federal government in 2005 to consolidate activities and facilities across the U.S. With a number of military institutions targeted for closure, BRAC has proved fortunate for El Paso and other communities whose economies are in large part affected by Fort Bliss—the construction budget at this one base is \$4.4 billion, a figure that is substantially greater than that for the entire U.S. Air Force.

The seemingly magical overnight appearance of entire working and living communities at this desert base was not happenstance. Masterplanning modern-day military installations

is a highly sophisticated process. Army garrison commanders are often compared to mayors of small cities. They are assisted by a Real Property Planning Board which is akin to a "city planning council." These are comprised of members of the command, operational, engineering, and planning and tenant interests of the installation who advise the various mission commanders on planning decisions.

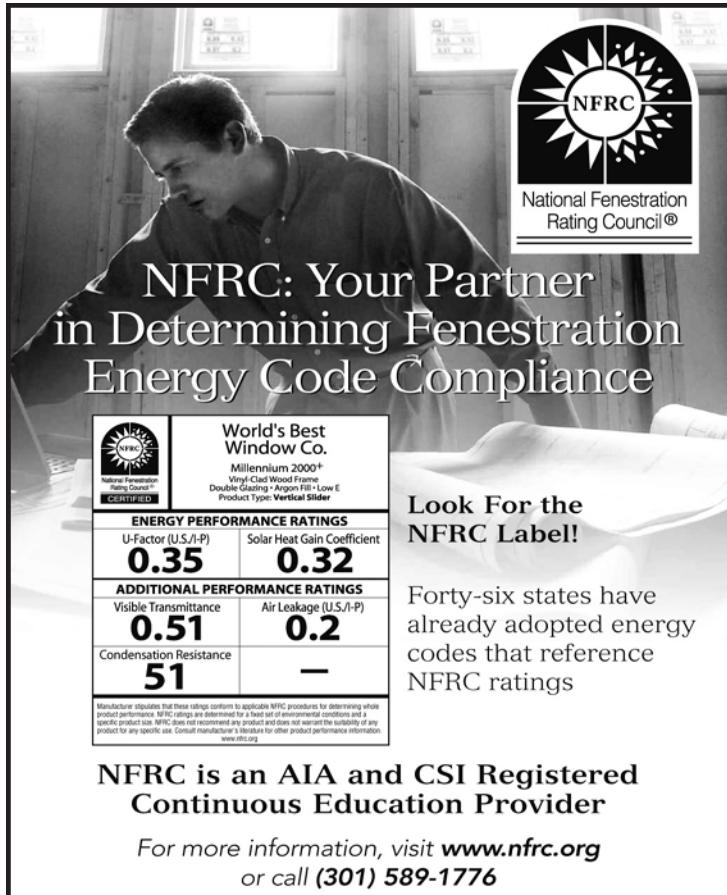
A myriad of interested parties participate in the Army's master planning process. The overall goal is to prepare a Real Property Master Plan (RPMP). Despite the anemic institutional look, devoid of any architectural character, that is often associated with military installations, the Department of Defense is now making great strides at improving such through the aforementioned planning process. The RPMP aims foremost to provide the master-planning aspects of force protection and anti-terrorism while actively embracing environmental stewardship through LEED sustainable design and development concepts and principles. The Department of Defense also supports the federal government program called "Greening of Government," in essence a 20-year sustainable planning horizon. Furthermore, Army planning officials also look to contextual compatibility when arranging the new facilities. These concerted planning activities also are coordinated with local community development. In fact, local planning officials, civilians, and business owners are encouraged to participate in the development actions being contemplated.

**The Fort Bliss Lifestyle Center, initially conceived by the Army as a "big box," has been reconsidered by Good Fulton & Farrell as a pedestrian-oriented commercial oasis in the desert.**

In response to the rapid relocation of such a large population to Fort Bliss, the Army Corps of Engineers, which is administering the design and construction of this huge undertaking, has developed a delivery mechanism called Military Construction Transformation. MILCON Transformation attempts to address many real-world challenges, chief among them is the efficient erection of a large amount of necessary facilities within a compressed timeframe. The new delivery mechanism will involve procedures that will impact how the Army can access the best design and construction practices for Fort Bliss in terms of performance-based criteria without compromising its mission or the specific implications of community, order, and sense of place that position the installation squarely within the Army's overarching military tradition.

This new delivery process has allowed a "small town" to quickly rise in the desert. The buildings are constructed in a variety of techniques, including modular prefabricated assemblies that are delivered to the site approximately 90 percent complete. Facades are generally clad in a desert-colored stucco with an applied stone or split-block plinth that recalls the historical vernacular of the region.

Continued on page 14



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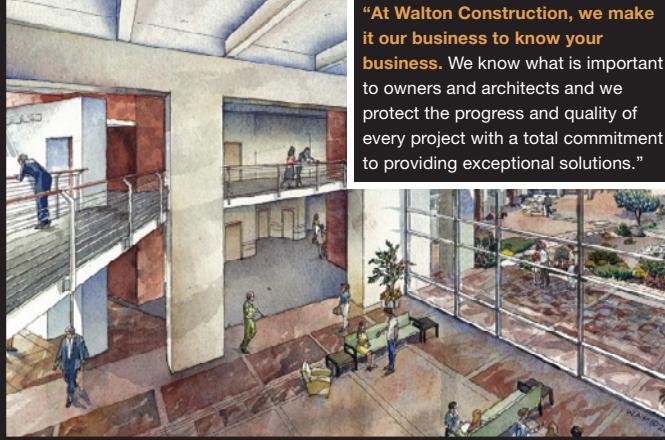
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Continued from page 10

for "integrity." Interior woodwork came to life with a fresh seal, and original exterior fascia boards blended with the new after a fresh coat of paint.

Asked recently about the responsibility inherent in such a project, Weir said, "It is a privilege to have the opportunity to bring this home back to life. I am still in awe of its subtle sophistication, and am honored to be able to share it with friends and visitors from around the world." Robin and her designer, Reese Beddingfield, were a daily presence at the house from the initial investigation stage through the restoration's completion.

As the scope of the project was defined, Weir and Beddingfield made the pilgrimage to Taliesin West. The staff at Wright's Arizona retreat, as well as an independent preservation consultant, confirmed the direction of the project and recommended methods and materials for common Usonian issues. Weir recalls the pride and commitment shown by all of the craftsmen who worked on the house, understanding the significance of the project.

With permission, a brick mason brought his daughter out to the house to write a report for school. Electricians and plumbers worked tirelessly to find ways for modern conveniences to be installed without disrupting the clean and uncompromising aesthetic.

As with most Usonian homes, several pieces of furniture are detailed in Wright's drawings. Those pieces—a dining room table and benches, a curved sofa in the living room, and a pair of twin beds—are still in the home, enhanced by built-in millwork in the bedrooms, bathrooms, and study. All express the simple, yet profound geometry integral to Wright's work.

Reese Beddingfield, charged with furnishing the Kinney Residence for his client and friend, took cues from Wright's passion for Asian art and design. She met the particular challenge of restoring this rare jewel not into a museum, but a home—the balance between the character of the house, its artifacts, and her client's personal style produced a unique and authentic aesthetic. Beddingfield's selection of art and accouterments complement the scale of

the home and its furnishings, even without the grand piano dictated by Wright's drawings.

Since the completion of the restoration, Weir has opened the house to numerous individuals and groups, including AIA Amarillo. Pilgrims from as far away as Barcelona have shown up at the gate hoping for a glimpse and have been treated to a tour from the home's gracious owner.

With his Usonian concept—the term derived from an abbreviation for United States of North America—Wright aspired to create a whole new way of designing for middle-class Americans. He described his Usonian ideal this way: "We must have a big living room with as much vista and garden coming in as we can afford, with a fireplace in it, and open bookshelves, a dining table in the alcove, benches, and living-room tables built in; a quiet rug on the floor." With the restoration of the Kinney Residence, the Amarillo community, along with all of Texas, has an architectural landmark to be proud of, and a project to inspire a new generation of designers.

MASON ROGERS, AIA

Continued from page 12

An burnt-orange metal roof is also typical. While these examples of modern construction are in no manner architectural gems, military planning personnel were nevertheless savvy enough to outsource the quality-of-life component of the sprawling garrison.

Another innovative process currently being employed at Fort Bliss is the Area Development Guide (ADG), a planning tool similar to Building Information Modeling that uses computer-generated simulated environments that serve as virtual snapshots that depict proposed buildings within a specific landscape. The team of Jacobs/Huitt Zollars was selected by the Army Corps of Engineers to provide ADGs, along with design planning and infrastructure development, for the new construction at Fort Bliss. Implementing the ADG process is a significant part of the Army's strategy to achieve a high level of sustainable design. To that end the Army has issued the following mandate to the many A/E teams working at Fort Bliss: the architectural style of all future buildings shall reflect and reinforce the goal of an appropriate response to the environment and a commitment to sustainability for the installation; both the buildings and the site shall be designed and constructed in such ways as to incorporate

appropriate sustainable design strategies that will reduce the costs of energy and maintenance in the future through the intelligent selection of forms, materials, and details; responsible water control and use of sun protection and control are two of these sustainable strategies.

Another firm now involved in designing improvements at Fort Bliss is Good, Fulton & Farrell. The Dallas firm has been commissioned to develop the commercial nucleus for the Army base, the Fort Bliss Lifestyle Center. Now in its design phase, the complex will comprise approximately 498,400 square feet of leasable space and will include a Post Exchange, Army and Air Force Exchange Service offices, along with retail, restaurants, a cinema, and a fitness center.

Although the complex was initially conceived of as a "big box" retail center by the Department of Defense, the architects have skillfully masterplanned the programmatic requirements into a pedestrian-oriented commercial oasis. The color and material palettes mimic the regional architecture of the base without deliberately copying the physical aspects of the existing buildings on base.

Of particular interest is how the design team finessed the unwavering requirement for

implementation of force protection and anti-terrorism planning. The typical pedestrian/vehicular open space required between commercial storefronts is 80 feet, but at the Lifestyle Center this requirement was expanded to 126 feet. To accommodate the expanded requirement, the architects referenced a dry river bed for the open space by including a combination of desert flora, gravel berms, colored concrete, and pavers. The strong axial composition of the complex is punctuated by two water fountains, one at the northern plaza entrance and another in a larger plaza at the center. Shade canopies over the storefronts were also creatively devised, with versions ranging from completely opaque to some with a level of porosity to capture and manipulate the intense southwestern light.

The sensitive architectural approach now being undertaken at Fort Bliss, as exemplified by the Lifestyle Center, represents an extraordinary change for the U.S. military but undoubtedly will be welcomed by the thousands of families who soon will take residency there. In the coming years after this unprecedented expansion is completed, Fort Bliss will stand as a model for master-planning efforts around the world.

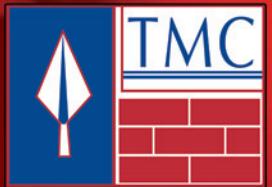
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## AIA Austin Awards 15 Projects

**A U S T I N** On April 18, AIA Austin recognized 15 projects at its 2009 Design Awards Gala held at the historic Browning Hangar on the redeveloped grounds of former Mueller Municipal Airport. Of the 115 submitted projects, 14 received Design Awards and one received a Studio Award.

The jury met in Austin two weeks earlier. Jurors were Natalye Appel, FAIA, of Natalye Appel + Associate Architects in Houston; Eddie Jones, AIA, of Jones Studio in Phoenix; and Reed Kroloff, Assoc. AIA, director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum.

The following received Design Awards, this year's sole level of recognition for built work.

**Action Figure Studios** by Rhode:Hurt Architects transformed a 1980s-era meat packing plant into sophisticated multimedia offices, studios, and flexible, leasable production spaces at a \$68/sf budget. Pre-cast concrete elements were revealed, bringing new light and air into the resulting dramatic spaces. The design team played elements of refinement against the underlying industrial structure and used the restraint of a budget to their aesthetic advantage.

**Architecture for Discovery Green** by Page-SoutherlandPage comprises three primary structures—a café, a restaurant, and an administration building—that parallel two powerful pre-existing rows of live oaks. Each building is composed of long, thin volumes that draw activity from the major perpendicular promenade deep into the rest of the park. Porches, decks, terraces, and outdoor rooms create as much outside space as interior volumes.

**Cliff Street Duplex** by Alterstudio Architects defines two private courtyards around maturing trees and the units are organized to negotiate between the private spaces and dense foliage of the adjacent tree canopy. Hovering over the complex's parking, a 1,500-sf unit has floor-to-ceiling windows directed towards its courtyard while high windows provide a sense of continuity with the trees and sky. The 2,000-sf unit is organized around a double-height interior that opens to a private courtyard.

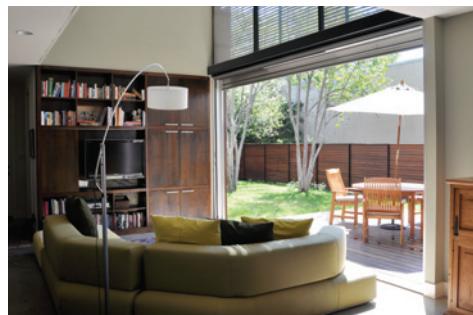
**House in Trees** by Tim Cuppett AIA sits on a wooded lot with a constricting easement that resulted in a narrow and deep composition. A high and wide overhang, supported on slender columns, creates shadows while a wooden *brise-soleil* on the west side screens the house. Both features meld the structure into its context of trees and vegetation in the undisturbed easement.



Action Figure Studios



Architecture for Discovery Green



Cliff Street Duplex



Lake Travis Retreat



House in Trees



The Long Center for Performing Arts



Lost Pines Chapel

**Lake Travis Retreat** by Dick Clark Architecture centrally organizes its public and private spaces around its pool, terrace, and existing live oaks. The public interior spaces can be joined with the large exterior spaces by way of sliding doors. A warm material palette of copper, ipe, and a variety of sandstones blends the lines of the house with its setting on the brow of the site overlooking Lake Travis.

**The Long Center for the Performing Arts** by Nelson Partners Architects transformed Austin's iconic Palmer Auditorium into a new home for its opera, ballet, and symphony companies. Over 97 percent of the 44 million lbs. of debris removed from the site was reused or recycled, retaining some of Palmer's best assets. The architects incorporated aluminum roof panels and other salvaged materials into the new design, capturing the potential and embodied value of these parts to serve as the cradle of the Long Center.

**Lost Pines Chapel** by LZT Architects was commissioned by the Boy Scouts of America. This interfaith chapel forms a contemplative moment within the pine forest near Austin. The simplicity of the frame geometry plays off the rustic quality of its cedar members. Composed of 22 frames, members are interconnected with steel plates and bundled together horizontally.

Continued on page 79



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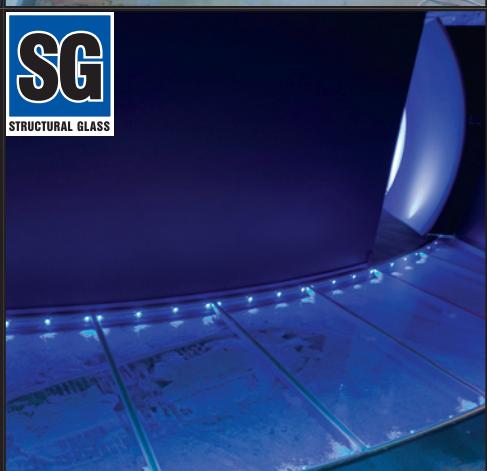


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## As Two Deans Depart, Two Others Arrive

Lars Lerup stepped down as dean of the Rice University School of Architecture on July 1, a move that leaves two of Texas' eight accredited schools of architecture searching for replacements. Earlier this year Joe Mashburn, AIA, announced that he would depart the dean's office at the University of Houston's Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture.

Meanwhile, a new architectural dean has been named to lead the University of Texas at San Antonio while the interim dean at Texas A&M University is expected to be approved in mid-July as the next dean of its College of Architecture.

Lerup, after serving 16 years as the dean at Rice and as the school's William Ward Watkin Professor of Architecture, will pursue a yearlong fellowship at the American Academy in Rome. He will study the Pantheon as a recipient of the 113th annual Rome Prize. Lerup's stay in Rome will coincide with his previously planned sabbatical from Rice. Afterward, he plans to return to Rice as a tenured professor and co-director (with Joe Powell) of the Rice Building Institute. A replacement for Lerup's position has not been named.

Across town, the University of Houston has formed a search committee led by John Bowen,

dean of the UH Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, to find a replacement for Mashburn. After 12 years as architectural dean, Mashburn will leave prior to the start of the fall semester. He plans to continue teaching architecture at the university.

UTSA's new architectural dean is Dr. John D. Murphy Jr., who is scheduled to begin in August after leaving Auburn University's McWhorter School of Building Science. Murphy received his doctoral degree in architecture, his master's degree in construction management, and his bachelor's degree in building construction from Texas A&M University. Robert Baron, AIA, has served as interim dean since 2007.

During its July 16-17 meeting, TAMU's Board of Regents is expected to confirm the appointment of Dr. Jorge Vanegas, AIA, as the new dean. He has been interim dean since July 2008. A registered architect in Colombia, Vanegas has served since 2006 as director of the university's Center for Housing and Urban Development. Vanegas holds a Master of Science and doctorate degrees in construction engineering and management from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford University.

T A S T A F F

## Legislature Wrap Up: Architects Gain

**A U S T I N** Despite an acrimonious end to the 81st Texas Legislature, architects appear to have gained in matters of practice and lawsuit reform. Other measures expected to be considered by lawmakers were instead left to die on the House floor in the waning days of the session due to a delay tactic intended to quash a politically charged voter ID bill. The bills that survived still must be signed by the governor before becoming law, and that June 21 veto deadline loomed as this edition went to press.

Successful lobbying efforts organized by the Texas Society of Architects accomplished the passage of two bills pertaining to lawsuit reform. One, SB 2141, affirms that the 10-year statute of repose means 10 years, regardless of whether a plaintiff tries to bring a design professional into a lawsuit as a third-party defendant. Another, SB 1201, expands the causes of action in which a certificate of merit is required, meaning certificates of merit would now be required for each claim in a complaint against

a design professional where the professional's judgment is at issue.

Two other successes related to business. HB 4765 temporarily (for two years) will increase the small business tax exemption for the franchise tax to \$1 million in gross revenues, and HB 1055 changed the five-day rule to a 20-day rule for submitting plans for accessibility review by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

On the defense side, TSA defeated two amendments to proposed bills that would have allowed bidding of professional services for governmental projects and a bill that would have licensed the practice of construction and program management for governmental entities. Also, although the strategy ultimately failed, the engineers' lobby attempted to empower the Texas Board of Professional Engineers with the ultimate authority to determine whether an engineer is practicing architecture, which would have overstepped the jurisdiction of the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners.

T A S T A F F

## Art Dealers Present 'Architectonic'

The Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas present "Architectonic" at CADD Art Lab. Described by as a "show about architecture, without architecture," the exhibit works with forms such as mass, volume, interior vs. exterior, site-specificity, and public vs. private. Information is posted at [www.caddallas.net](http://www.caddallas.net). Thru JULY 9

## Green Building Showcase in Dallas

The U.S. Green Building Council North Texas Chapter, Construction Specifications Institute Dallas Chapter, and AIA Dallas' Committee on the Environment will host a showcase of the latest green building products and technologies for commercial and residential use at the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas. For more information, visit [www.ntxsustainableshowcase.com](http://www.ntxsustainableshowcase.com). JULY 16

## Call for Entries: 2010 AIA Honor Awards

A call for entries has been issued for the AIA Honor Awards program, which recognizes achievements to elevate the general quality of architecture practice, establish a standard of excellence, and inform the public of the breadth and value of architecture practice. Access the entry form at [www.aia.org/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab079807.pdf](http://www.aia.org/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab079807.pdf). Deadline is AUG 28

## 'Endangered Modern' at ArCH

Houston Mod presents the exhibit "Endangered Modern: The Real Story" at the Architecture Center of Houston. The exhibit highlights threats to architecturally significant structures that can lead to their loss. For more information, visit [www.aiahouston.org](http://www.aiahouston.org). Thru AUG 28

## Texas Treasures Nominations Due

The Texas Historical Commission is accepting nominations for communities that show a high level of creativity and ingenuity in utilizing THC tools and programs to preserve their Texas sense of place. Winners will be awarded with the second annual First Lady's Texas Treasures Award. For more information, contact April Garner at [april.garner@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:april.garner@thc.state.tx.us) or (512) 463-2630. Nominations due AUG 31

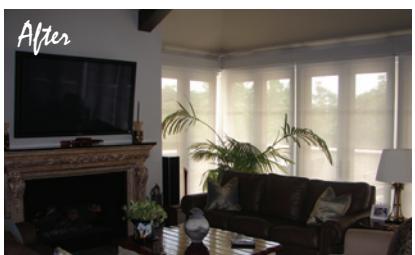
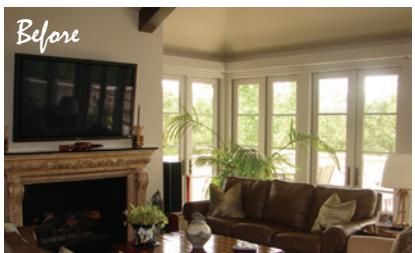
## 'Ranch Gates of the Southwest'

Texas Folklife presents "Ranch Gates of the Southwest: Manifestations of Individualism" featuring photographs by Daniel M. Olsen and Henk van Assen, in two parts. Excerpts from their work can be found in the May/June 2009 issue of *Texas Architect*. More information is available at [www.texasfolklife.org](http://www.texasfolklife.org). Thru FEB 2010

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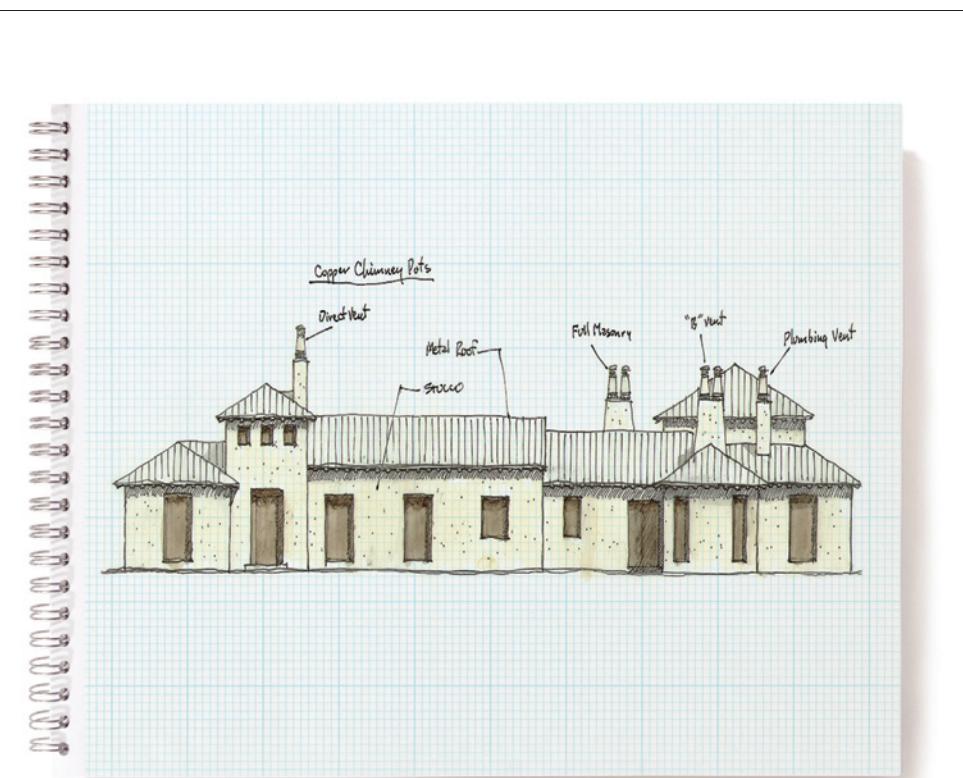
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BY JACK ARNOLD 



## Forwarding Dallas

Designed by Portugal firms Atelier Data and MOOV, Forwarding Dallas is one of three winning projects in Urban Revision's Re:Vision Dallas competition to design a fully sustainable 2.5-acre block in downtown Dallas. Forwarding Dallas is an 854-unit housing development modeled after a hillside with a series of valleys and hilltops containing native vegetation. The southwest side is covered in a solar shield that can be adjusted like Venetian blinds to vary heat loads in summer and winter; the northeast side is faced with hay bales for extra insulation. The design includes 40 percent affordable housing, enough garden space to feed 300 inhabitants, and an educational facility. Elements of this project and the two other winners — schemes by Little of Charlotte, N.C., and David Baker and Partners Architects and Fletcher Studio of San Francisco — will be considered when the block project reaches its final design phase. Cash prizes were awarded. The Central Dallas Community Development Corporation is lead developer.

## Stone Oak Branch Library

Designed by Marmon Mok Architecture, the 15,000-sf Stone Oak Branch Library will serve San Antonio's growing population on the far northwest edge of the city. The crescent-shaped building will be sited in a clearing among existing live oaks and will provide views of the Hill Country prairie's native grasses, prickly pears, and elms, as well as neighboring limestone escarpments and a dry creek bed. Taking cues from local historic structures, the building makes use of ample overhangs, sun screens, and stone walls. Natural light sculpts the shape of the building, which features expanses of high-performance glazing interspersed with translucent panels. Other elements of sustainable design include solar shading provided by a dramatic, perforated metal screen that tapers dynamically along the entire eastern and southern facades of the library. Construction may begin as early as this fall and is slated for completion in 2011. The project is expected to earn LEED Silver certification.



## Archives of the Episcopal Church

The Archives of the Episcopal Church, designed by Studio 8 Architects of Austin, is a five-story, 70,000-sf building that will be the new home for the church's national archives, which are currently housed in a late-1950s campus as part of the Southwest Episcopal Seminary. The facility's location on the southeast corner of a recently purchased downtown block was chosen to better engage Austin's community, and the design's form and transparency are meant to evoke the civic nature of the building. Planned for current needs and future growth, the project includes a 400-car parking garage and space for document storage, offices, exhibits, research, and reflection. The southwest corner and north side of the block have been reserved for future development, which is expected to include a conference center, additional office space, and retail. Because the block is in a Capitol view corridor, development is limited to no more than 75 feet. Construction is slated to begin in two years at an estimated cost of \$40 million.



# So You Want To Do Houses?

Residential design is not for every architect, says one who has learned from experience

by MICHAEL MALONE, AIA

A casual survey of why people become architects will inevitably lead to an early interest in or passion for the design of houses. It is therefore surprising to many people that not all architects design houses. Single-family residential design is something most architects feel they have the skills and knowledge to do effectively, but the reality is few of us makes an ongoing practice of it and even fewer can earn a meaningful living doing it. I know, I try to do it every day and it is tough.

A good friend of mine, Tim, got the opportunity to do what all of us architects (and a lot of non-architects) dream of—to design and build his own house. Tim enjoys a successful architectural career working almost exclusively on commercial projects. Using this experience, he used his considerable organizational skills when he designed his house in an orderly manner that reflected everything he'd learned about how to lay out and plan an efficient building. Using the careful assumptions any of us would make when planning for economy and efficiency, he arranged the rooms in a compact mass with a minimum of exterior surface area. He utilized standard sizes of lumber and masonry when laying out and organizing his elevations. He avoided curves, expensive finishes, and difficult details. He stacked his plumbing in a logical manner, minimized lighting fixtures, and oriented the house to minimize solar gain while maximizing opportunities for natural lighting. He reviewed his completed drawings carefully with a responsible contractor with a reputation for fair pricing and an acceptable level of quality and provided cut sheets and data for all of the materials he thought necessary, so as to leave no questions unanswered and to avoid gray areas that could lead to higher or incomplete pricing. A few weeks later, the contractor called him with news that his bid number was ready and a meeting was arranged to review the pricing.

That night Tim (and his wife), for the first time in his professional career, were on the receiving end of a cost estimate that was significantly over budget. He'd been in the room as a consultant many times when a client reacted with shock when a bid or budget price for a building project came in high and he was

In his forthcoming book, the author relates the value of using drawings and models as tools to help residential clients through the design process. These two renderings depict a recently completed house he designed for a couple just outside the northeast Texas town of Athens.



RENDERINGS COURTESY THE AUTHOR.

adept at all the things to say to handle damage control. But in this case it was his own house, his own money! He was the client and the other partner in this particular business deal was his wife who immediately brought into question his professional competence. How could he design a house so far over budget and not know it?

Prior to that day, Tim had always dismissed the residential aspect of my practice as a sort of hobby that allowed me to dally in frivolous things for folks with too much money. He assumed that the houses were an aspect of my practice that we did for “fun” as an artistic outlet for ourselves and they really weren’t a serious part of the business of my office. Like many architects in larger commercial or institutional firms he had never been involved in the design of a single-family home, never budgeted one, nor really thought of them in any context other than the annual issue of *Record Houses*. But after that day, Tim needed some help and he called me because he thought I could guide him out of his mess.

It is not unusual to be an architect and never design a house. The first one I was involved with happened after 16 years of practice, six as the principal of my own firm. That first house came to me through one of my commercial clients who, with his wife, decided to do significant additions and remodel to a large house and hired my firm because we had been handling a variety of other projects for them. At almost the same time, another friend of theirs was planning to build a house in the same neighborhood and they referred them to us. We went from doing no houses to two houses in the space of a few days and single-family residences have been an integral and rewarding part of my practice ever since.

Tim’s predicament and the way I was able to help him with it became the spark of an idea that led to my creating a 90-minute continuing-education program for the TSA convention titled “So You Want To Do Houses?” It was meant as a sardonic twist on the typical cocktail chatter I endure at a party when someone asks me what I do for a living and after I tell them I’m an architect they then relate how they always wanted to be an architect but couldn’t do the math or draw a straight line. This is usually followed by a loosely worded question to me along the lines of “Do you do residential?” which (then) requires the confession from them that they always wanted to do houses. In one of the most excruciating variants on this conversation, they ask me if I designed my own house. After I tell them “No,” they lose all respect and move on to chat with someone else.

In my convention program I provided a broad overview of residential practice and how it was organized within my firm. I relied heavily on my own experience, my central theme being this: even though houses are integral to the public’s perception of what we do, it is a unique architectural project type and not one that adapts easily to our established patterns of professional practice. What we are taught in school about the delivery of services simply has not worked for my residential practice, nor has it proved relevant or supportive to my clients’ understanding of the design process either. Houses are unique projects with unique client expectations and goals, and a generalized process as outlined in the standard agreements for services simply didn’t work. Experience has taught me that another way of looking at providing these services was necessary, and the development of a practice process and the subsequent success we have had servicing our clients by reorganizing our priorities became a basic model for our doing houses on an ongoing basis.

When we first started designing houses we did them like commercial projects. We tried to move through the five stages of the design process (schematic design, design development, construction documents, bid-

ding and permitting, and construction administration) in a sequential manner. We also brought along all of our typical consultants (mechanical, electrical and plumbing, structural, and, occasionally, civil) and a full slate of services and staff to coordinate and document the process. We kept having problems though—the process that worked so well in the design of our commercial projects seemed ponderous and inflexible. It was frankly confusing to our clients, who were not used to working with architects and for whom our professional jargon made no sense. Even worse for our planning purposes the typical allocation of fees and resources simply didn’t work. We were not just losing money on the houses; they were taking our focus off the other jobs in our office that we were delivering along more traditional service patterns. But we loved doing them! I knew we would have to adjust and change the service delivery process if we were going to continue to do them, so I began to experiment with the right mix of services and fees to develop a practical and effective way of doing houses that would allow them to be a meaningful part of our project mix and continue to be good business. More important, I wanted them to be fun.

Last year McGraw-Hill asked me to write a book based on “So You Want To Do Houses?” which is scheduled for publication this fall. In the book—tentatively titled *The Architect’s Guide to Residential Design* in an apparent attempt to drain some of its cynicism—I point out my experiences and those of my associates in the context of our projects using real-life examples of things that went well and things that unfortunately did not go well.

Developed from actual experiences (good and bad, sometimes terrible), the book discusses residential practice as a special case in the way architects provide professional services. In my practice I’ve learned the importance of immediately setting a schedule with the client for all future design meetings, which is intended to measure progress and set expectations for both client and architect. The book also summarizes why programming is the most critical component of getting the project started and how the program is the tool that enforces shared accountability on both the architect and the client as the house is being designed. In addition, I explain in detail why the budget for the project should be determined before the contract is signed and how the architect can build trust with potential clients by helping them establish that cost figure through soft bidding the project prior to signing the contract.

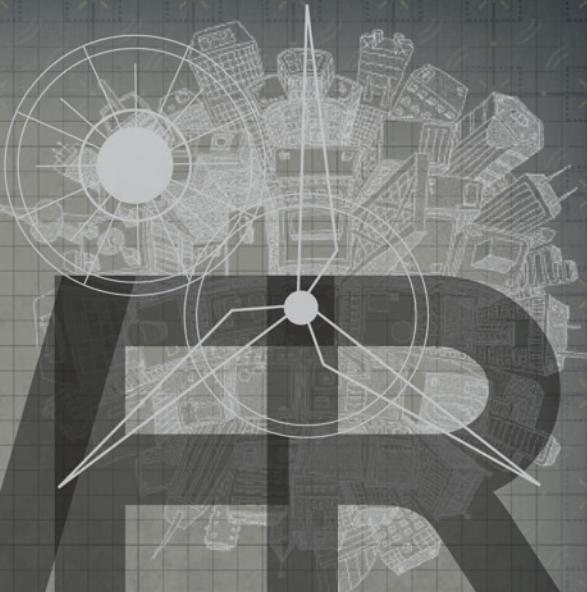
Finally, the book will concentrate on how to deliver residential design services in a meaningful way that allows for straightforward, manageable client interaction and provides appropriate compensation for the professional services required to design and document the house. I attempt to dispute the perception that compensation for services should be tied to the cost of the house and instead recommend that compensation be aligned with the services the clients require, such as their ability (or inability) to make timely decisions and their overall focus on the project. Each chapter includes a case study from our practice with an actual project summarized, including how the client worked with us, how successful we were in making them happy, and in some cases our role in subsequent litigation with the contractor. The book is intended as a practical guide to residential design – this common but misunderstood aspect of our profession – and an optimistic endorsement of the value we as professionals bring to the lives of those we serve.

*The article was adapted from the preface to The Architect’s Guide to Residential Design by Michael Malone, AIA, scheduled for publication by McGraw-Hill in September.®*

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IN THE DARTING TO AN AIM ”

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



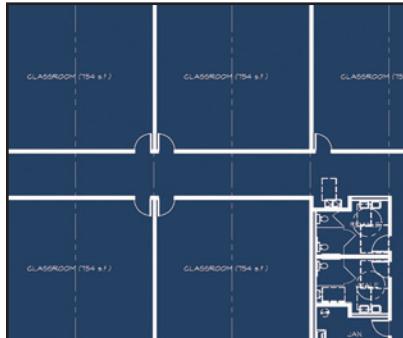
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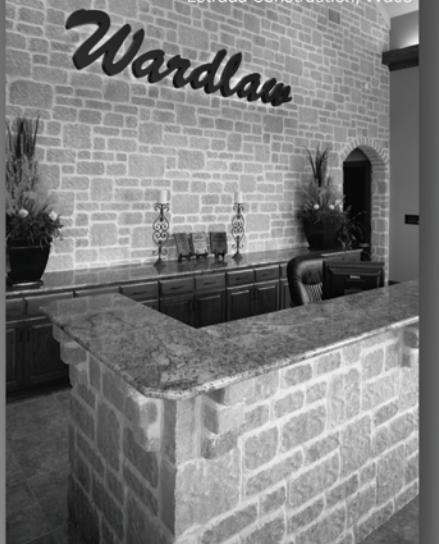
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# Suburban Revolution

New subdivisions in Dallas take distinctly different approaches to creating modernist enclave

by GREGORY IBÁÑEZ, AIA

DURING OUR NOW-PASSED HOUSING BOOM, IT CERTAINLY FELT AS THOUGH THE APPRECIATION of Modern residential design gained wider acceptance, as evidenced by the emergence of *Dwell* magazine and the resurgence of classic mid-century furniture. It has long been the architect's lament that if consumers *really* had a choice, many would prefer contemporary, architect-designed homes instead of those ubiquitous builder McMansions. Two ambitious and important developments in Dallas, Kessler Woods and Urban Reserve, set out to prove this point.

As architects we are most accustomed to seeing the Modern home as the exception—that outlier nestled between the prevailing Ranch or Tudor-style house, a physical rebuke to the thoughtless and habitual embrace of comfortable nostalgia. Most of us can recall the thrill of first viewing an iconic Modern home set in a traditional neighborhood, its crisp geometry and transparency quietly exuding a confident sense of the future and all of the possibilities therein. This singular insertion produces the “shock of the new” that we associate with Modern architecture, and this sensation is particularly acute in a residential setting. However, this perception changes appreciably when one enters a development that is totally of contemporary design, as if the control has been removed from the experiment, the once exceptional having become the norm. Another potential problem is that Modern architecture is bred to push against rules, and in groups individual improvisation can result in a lack of overall harmony.

Neither Kessler Woods nor Urban Reserve really revolutionize the form: both are essentially suburban infill developments that embrace the automobile, by necessity if not choice, since they are not within walking distance of commuter rail stations. Nor do they have the small-town utopian pretensions of similar New Urbanist developments—i.e., mandatory front porches and gazebos ready-made for red, white, and blue bunting on the Fourth of July. And unlike most suburban housing developments, each project represents a specific response to unique site conditions.

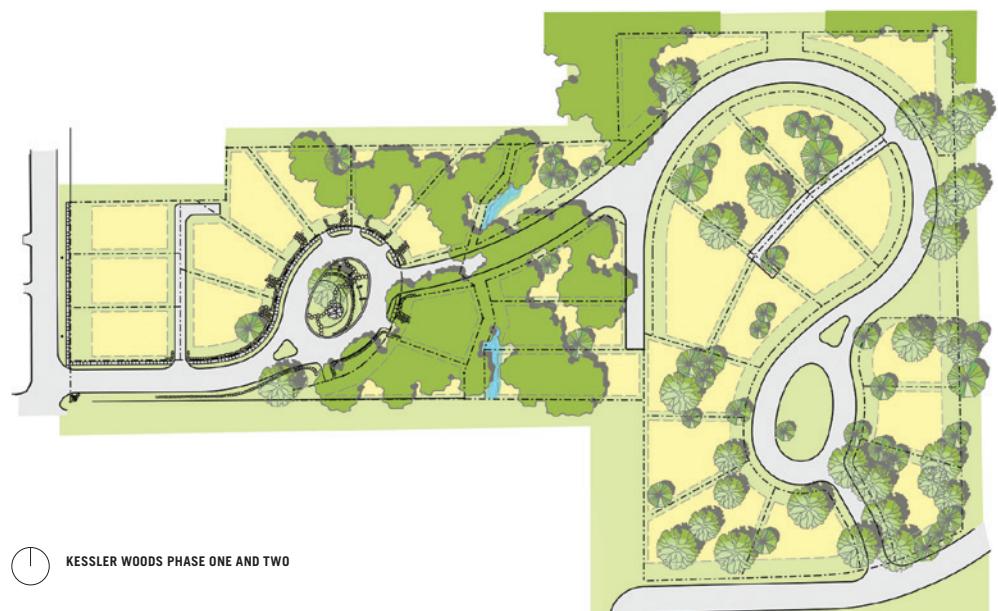
## Kessler Woods

Oak Cliff was one of Dallas' first exclusive enclaves for the elite. Set on the bluffs southwest of downtown and above the swampy Trinity River, it features the most stunning topography of any neighborhood in the city. The site of the Kessler Woods development embodies these qualities—hillside homes, some with downtown views, a meandering creek, and mature trees. Coy Talley, ASLA, of Talley Associates led the planning effort and the result is a picturesque arrangement of 30 lots that is extremely sensitive to the land. The street preserves the creek and the large sheltering trees by gracefully curving through the site while creating interesting juxtapositions between the homes, all of which are intended to be fenceless. Individual lots are graded as minimally as possible, leaving sloping sites that encourage dynamic split-level solutions. Site walls and street island parks are constructed of split Lueders limestone, further accentuating the informal yet tailored feel.

The initial two phases of Kessler Woods comprise 30 lots of 7,500 square feet to one-half acre, with homes ranging between 2,800 and 5,000 square feet. The initial design guidelines were developed by Patrick Hammers of Hammers + Partners: Architecture Inc. and Clifford Welch, AIA, of Welch Architecture. The guidelines explicitly referenced the use of materials extant in the area, and this is reflected in the three homes that sit on Oak Cliff Boulevard outside the gates of the primary entry, which, while conspicuous in their contemporary detailing and massing, still respect the scale and setbacks of the adjacent houses. While not "Mad Men" retro, there is an unmistakable mid-century Modern sensibility to the development, particularly in the first-phase residences. These were primarily the work of the two aforementioned firms, with a notable exception being a graceful design by Frank Welch, FAIA.

The homes in Kessler Woods display a casual exuberance, with generous use of glazing, horizontal massing, sheltering low roof forms, and carports often used in lieu of garages. The materials palette is warm and rich and includes zinc and oxidized steel panels, composite wood siding, dark brick, and ashlar stone. The individual homes gracefully co-exist and overlap without imposing, windows carefully placed to gather light and views while respecting each other's privacy. In general the caliber of architecture is exemplary and many of the individual homes would elevate any neighborhood in the city.

(left) The Sunrise House by Buchanan Architecture, described by the architect as a "rusty box," shows the result of a loosening of the design guidelines for the second phase of Kessler Woods. (below) At the rear of the Sunrise House is the parkway edge, defined by slabs of Lueders limestone, with naturalized landscapes of native grasses, carpet roses, vitex, cedar elms, and oaks. In the plan below, the first phase is shown on the left.



KESSLER WOODS PHASE ONE AND TWO

The coherence of the first phase of 15 lots was no accident. The developer, Matt Holley, was also the contractor for each, and the design guidelines were carefully followed. However, as the project met with initial success, the development's second phase was opened to other contractors and architects at the request of buyers. Other than setbacks, the design guidelines were also left behind, giving the architects a relatively free hand. Since the ambience of the initial development is what attracted the buyers in the first place, it would follow that the second phase continues the spirit of its predecessor, albeit with a bit more variety of materials and architectural solutions. A prime example in this phase is a self-described "rusty box" home by Russell Buchanan, AIA, with oxidized steel-clad intersecting horizontal forms that seem to float above the landscape.

## Urban Reserve

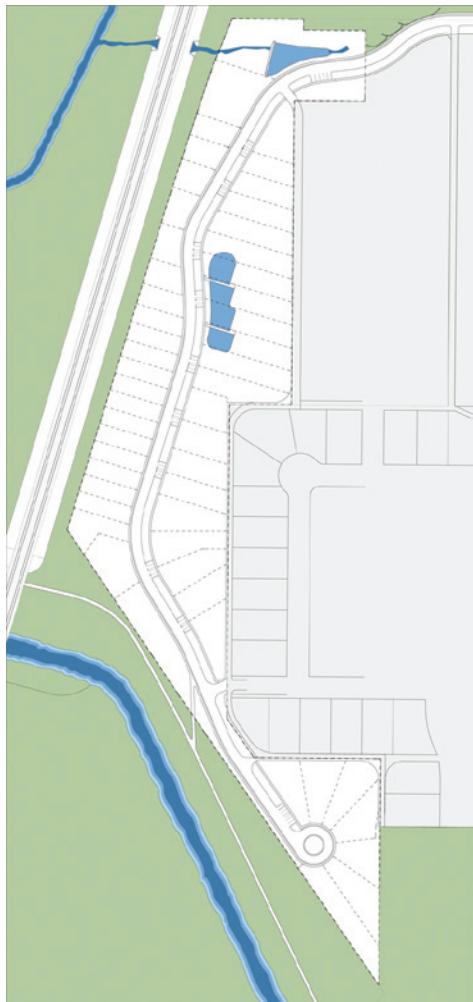
Located just "inside the loop," the North Dallas locale of Urban Reserve could not differ more from stately Oak Cliff. The area is a diverse collection of strip mall and big box developments, Royal Oaks Country Club, the sprawling Texas Instruments campus, and post-war suburbs of various vintages. The site itself is a former landfill, partially in flood plain, but sharing a long western border with White Rock Creek and its very popular hike and bike trails, along with the elevated DART light-rail line and its whooshing trains. The topography of the site is subtle, generally falling towards the creek, with clusters of mature trees spaced intermittently.

The developer, Diane Cheatham of Urban Edge Developers, is a well-known figure in Dallas architectural circles having previously completed many award-winning urban infill residential projects featuring progressive design as a defining feature. In order to attract the sophisticated clientele needed to occupy the 50 lots, the project aims to "establish a new vision for the development of single-family neighborhoods—one of sustainably designed, modernist houses."

The planning effort was led by Bob Meckfessell, FAIA, of dsgn associates, and Kevin Sloan, AIA, ASLA, of Kevin Sloan Studio. The site, which is not gated, is bisected by a single street ending in a cul-de-sac, with the eastern lots also served by alleys. Conceived by Sloan as a "functional landscape," the project has three distinct zones. First is the Entry, marked by a

(top) A few of the properties on the east – or "wet" – side of Urban Reserve are accessed from the street via bridges, including the house designed by Vincent Snyder, Architect. The planners directed runoff into these rain gardens that are planted with horsetail reeds and bald cypress. (bottom) Urban Reserve – planned by Bob Meckfessell, AIA, of dsgn associates, and Kevin Sloan, AIA, ASLA, of Kevin Sloan Studio – was conceived as a "functional landscape," according to Sloan, who designed the streetscape to integrate with the individual lots.





URBAN RESERVE MASTER PLAN

large pond formed to gather rain water for irrigation and planted with a rustic array of aquatic species, and a steel composition marking the development entrance as well as the communal mailboxes. The last is the Park, which is a broad meadow of buffalo grass extending White Rock Creek Park as sites for the southern houses. But the most interesting feature is the second zone, the Street.

The street is sloped to the east, away from the creek, in order to direct runoff into rain gardens forming the “wet” side planted with horsetail reeds and bald cypress. These function as biofiltration and occur within the deep setbacks of the larger eastern home sites. The western edge becomes the “dry” side, planted with desert willows in continuous beds of decomposed granite. These lots are smaller, generally 40 feet wide and 5,000 sf in area, with no setbacks on three sides but a 20-foot setback on the south, creating a rhythm of tight yards between the houses.

The urban form of the project is not yet defined as only about a third of the homes have

been completed. The western side in particular is a gap-toothed smile, as it is intended to form a continuous street wall of closely spaced facades. But the intention is clear and hopefully with time the three-dimensional character envisioned in the guidelines will emerge. Meanwhile there are some fascinating homes already in place or underway.

On the west side there are designs by architects such as Russell Buchanan, AIA; Lionel Morrison, FAIA; Dan Shipley, FAIA; Robert Meckfessell, FAIA; and Jim Wiley, FAIA. As a group the homes are crisp and rectilinear, typically with south glazing facing semi-blind north facades as intended. Save those near the entry, the homes on the east side generally sit on larger lots and are less restricted by setbacks and hence tend to be more free in form. Fewer of these have been completed, but the home by Max Levy, FAIA, stands out as a skillful composition of simple forms employing a limited palette of zinc metal and plaster, all detailed with a deft hand. Diane Cheatham’s own home, designed

by Williams and Tsien, is under construction overlooking the entry pond.

What to make of these two developments? They are aimed at a discerning public and it must be stated that both are comparatively elite sanctums, with prices starting in the mid-to-high six figures. While Dallas already boasts a relative wealth of outstanding Modern homes by local, regional, and national architects, these projects represent another acknowledgement of the demand for a domestic architecture that speaks to our era. And their unique nature is obvious when one witnesses the steady stream of slow-moving cars of gawkers, craning their necks to study the specimens in these cabinets of architectural curiosities. Maybe someday projects such as these will no longer require the heroic efforts of visionary developers. Until then, these homes represent progress which can be built upon...maybe in the next boom cycle.

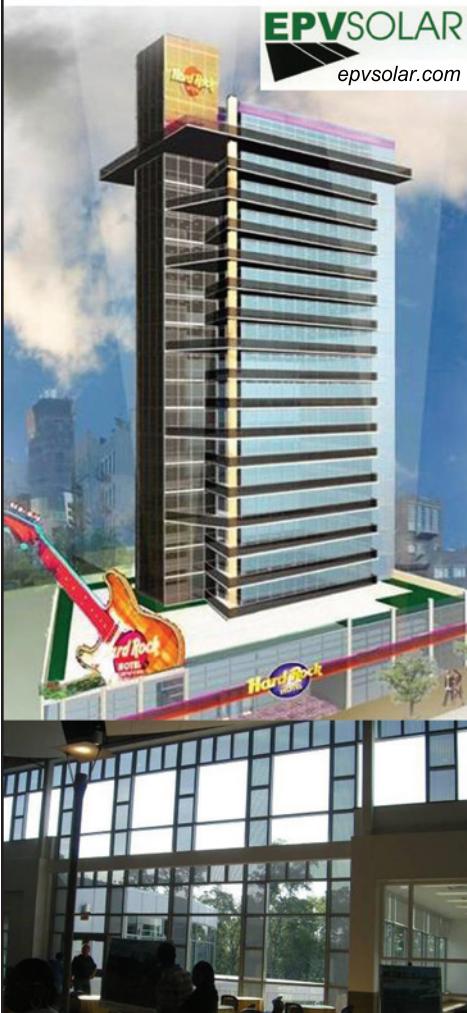
Ibañez is an associate principal of Laguarda Low Architects.



On the west – or “dry” – side of Urban Reserve, Dan Shipley, FAIA, designed a house that floats above the ground on 60-foot-long steel beams. The photo shows the south facade of the house.



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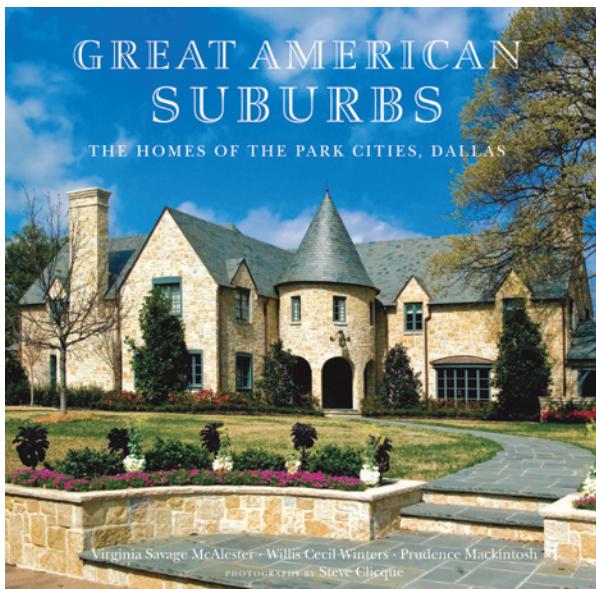
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# Neighbors

*Great American Suburbs* installment vividly details multi-dimensional histories of Dallas' Park Cities

by STEPHEN FOX



ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN VIRGINIA MCALESTER; ARCHITECT and historian Willis Winters, FAIA; journalist Prudence Mackintosh; and photographer Steve Clicque have produced an extraordinary work on the history and architecture of Dallas' two best-known twentieth-century residential communities, Highland Park and University Park. This sumptuously illustrated book contains a text that is lively and informative, documenting real estate development, demographic shifts, and changing architectural trends of the past 100 years in Dallas. Published late last year, *The Homes of the Park Cities, Dallas* is the latest installment of the Abbeville Press' *Great American Suburbs* series.

It seems inadequate to state that McAlester merely places the development of this pair of suburban communities, located adjacent to each other three miles north of downtown Dallas, in their historical context. What she does is recapitulate in admirably concise detail a history of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American suburban community development and a narrative of Dallas' urban expansion and economic evolution, explaining how these trends merged to affect the configurations of Highland Park and University Park. McAlester emphasizes that the historical trajectories of the adjoining communities are different: Highland Park was comprehensively developed by brothers-in-law E.L.

Continued on page 78

(top left) A latter-day example of Highland Park architecture is 3929 Potomac Avenue, completed in 2003 and designed by Lawrence W. Speck, FAIA, of Page Southerland Page. (bottom left) The Vernette B. and Betty Aldredge Slater home at 4219 Stanhope Avenue, built in 1935, combines English and French features.



Now Austin's tallest building, the Austonian has yet to top out at its ultimate height of 56 stories. Construction on the elliptical tower, shown at right, is scheduled to be complete next year. Ziegler Cooper Architects designed the Austonian to satisfy a demand for luxury condominiums located in the heart of downtown.

# Austin's Upscale Downtown

Even in the downturn, luxury condominium towers dominate the market

by STEPHEN SHARPE

ON JUNE 25 CONSTRUCTION ON THE AUSTONIAN residential tower reached the height of 51 floors, making it the tallest building in Austin. The project, designed by Ziegler Cooper Architects, will ultimately top out later this year at 56 floors (683 feet with glass crown) above Congress Avenue. The sleek elliptical Austonian is one of the last of the newest generation of high-rise projects that is reconfiguring the Austin skyline as the city prepares to accommodate an expected 25,000 downtown inhabitants.

The Austonian is scheduled to open next year, followed by two other high-profile luxury condominium towers that are set to come online in 2011. At that point, after a decade of construction within the central business district (CBD), Austin's era of ascendant exuberance will halt. No major additions to the CBD are being planned because financing for big projects has essentially dried up. Due to the global credit crisis, Austin is likely to undergo a period of at least three or four years during which no new tall buildings will rise in downtown.

Still, with the Austonian and several other high-profile projects taking shape before their eyes, many people in Austin are asking the same question: will these gleaming new residential towers have occupants? Common wisdom seems to infer that a glut of new housing in the urban core will result from overbuilding, that supply will exceed demand. Not so, say those who have run the numbers, whose math foretells of a market in 2011 where, with no new condo projects in the pipeline, every available unit has a buyer. Whether or not those buyers materialize, one thing is certain: the majority of units being built in downtown Austin are designed for an elite class of consumer who seeks an aura of pampered exclusivity.

To discern the realities of real estate in Austin's downtown during the downturn, I invited



six people with inside knowledge to join an informal discussion in early May that focused on residential development in the CBD. Participants were Dean Almy, director of the UT Austin School of Architecture's graduate program in urban design; Sinclair Black, FAIA, principal of Black & Vernooy Architects and a longtime advocate for thoughtful urban design in Austin; Kevin Burns, founder of the real estate company urbanspace; Michael Knox, ASLA, who as staff of the municipality is helping to draft the Downtown Austin Plan; Elizabeth Mueller, director of the UT Austin's Center for Sustainable Development; and Brett Rhode, AIA, principal of Rhode Partners and the designer of several residential projects for the downtown area.

Everyone was in agreement that Austin's continued growth requires serious consideration about how the city will accommodate a population that is expected to double in the next 20 years from today's 1.65 million within the metropolitan statistical area. There was also consensus on the challenges inherent with developing the urban core for residential, particularly the finite amount of available space due to the many tracts occupied by government buildings and because of restrictions intended to maintain view corridors to the State Capitol. Those physical limitations further reduce the opportunities for building in the CBD, which has grown just slightly from the 14x14-block grid (one square mile) first laid out in 1839. Today's downtown is 17x18 blocks (1.7 square miles) bounded by Lady Bird Lake to the south, the Capitol grounds to the north, Interstate 35 to the east and Lamar Boulevard to the west.

As noted by Sinclair Black, there are 60,000 jobs downtown but not 60,000 living downtown. "The need for housing is huge, really huge relative to the jobs and entertainment opportunities," he said, adding, "We spent the last 50 years stripping downtown of the residences and building a monoculture of office space."

The dominant model for urban dwelling is the condominium tower, although in Austin other types of housing are being developed just outside the central city to satisfy the market for living close to downtown. Interestingly, that dominant model, as it has been designed and sold in Austin, addresses the desires of a thin slice of the demographic pie—either upwardly mobile singles or empty-nesters who don't have to work. What's missing are an adequate number of units large enough for a growing family, along with price points that allow working couples with kids to join the rarified ranks of soft-loft dwellers. Almy pointed to the obvious need for expanding the options if Austin's downtown is to have a diversified population.

"Many of the great cities in the world have a deliberate policy of facilitating a heterogeneous mix of lifestyle choices and class status, etc," he noted. "Sometimes there are, dare I use the term, social structures that are incentivized by combining low-income housing with upper-income housing, and that is seen as that as positive in terms of city life—it is part of what makes the city the city."

Mueller spoke directly about the need for affordable housing and adaptable building typologies that can accommodate sociological shifts, such as when the singles marry and decide to stay downtown after their babies are born: "I look at all the stuff going up now and I think, What happens when something changes about the demographics? How flexible are these buildings going to be; are we going to be able to reconfigure them? I think we ought to be thinking long term in a lot of different ways. We want to be creating these areas that can be very vibrant because they have different types of people of different ages who are all working and doing different things. That's part of what makes the city such a great place to live."

Kevin Burns, himself evidence of that shifting demographic, having moved downtown as a bachelor before marrying and starting a family but remaining in the heart of the city, cautioned that CBD should not bear the burden for Austin's need of affordable housing. When downtown's dirt was relatively cheap, he said, the market could accept more moderately priced housing, but times—and costs—have changed.

To underscore that reality, Brett Rhode said he has yet to be approached about designing a "basic" residential project downtown. Instead, he explained, the developer always envisions a high-end project, branded, iconic, luxurious, with the allure of security and exclusivity.

According to the City of Austin's Michael Knox, the Downtown Austin Plan now under development will address the need for options other than the tower methodology. More density in the areas adjacent to the CBD, he said, will require low- and mid-rise buildings, along with projects that will be more affordable and amenable to families with children.

Sharpe is the editor of *Texas Architect*.



# Building in 'Enough'

by VAL GLITSCH, FAIA





**PROJECT** Wroxton House + Studio, Houston

**CLIENT** Jonathan and Nonya Grenader

**ARCHITECT** Nonya Grenader, FAIA

**DESIGN TEAM** Nonya Grenader, FAIA; Jonathan Grenader; Timothy O'Leary; Tony Valadez; Judson Moore

**CONTRACTOR** Mainland Construction

**CONSULTANTS** Matrix Structural Engineers (structural); Lighting Unlimited (lighting); Westheimer Plumbing & Hardware Inc. (plumbing, hardware)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Nash Baker Photographer

THE SITE FOR THE HOUSE NONYA GRENADE, FAIA, DESIGNED FOR HER FAMILY in Houston was selected for the beauty of the existing trees and shade and its ideal proximity as a construction site. Intimately acquainted with the amenities of the Southampton neighborhood, a deed-restricted subdivision near Rice, the Grenaders had lived next door for 11 years before their elderly neighbor offered to sell them her house in 1997. The 55x130-foot lot presented an opportunity to create a new environment tailored to their long-established live/work lifestyle.

Grenader, currently a professor-in-practice at Rice University's School of Architecture, has spent more than 30 years presenting students with "the elementary ideas they will continually return to as architects—path, edge, and spatial order" and advising them to "first establish a strong organization and then edit around it." Bringing innovation to the small project is a challenge she poses to her students; the same challenge informs her professional work as well.

She and her husband, Jonathan Grenader, a commercial property manager and developer, envisioned an 1,800-sf house and 700-sf studio/workspace that would share equal importance with a garden. To preserve existing trees, they

let the landscape define the building footprint. The result, which Grenader attributes to an editing process of giving preference to what they valued most, pares the project down to just enough—demonstrating that an economy of materials and details, coupled with intelligent siting and responsiveness to climate and context, can achieve both an accessible sustainability and an experiential richness with the simplest of means.

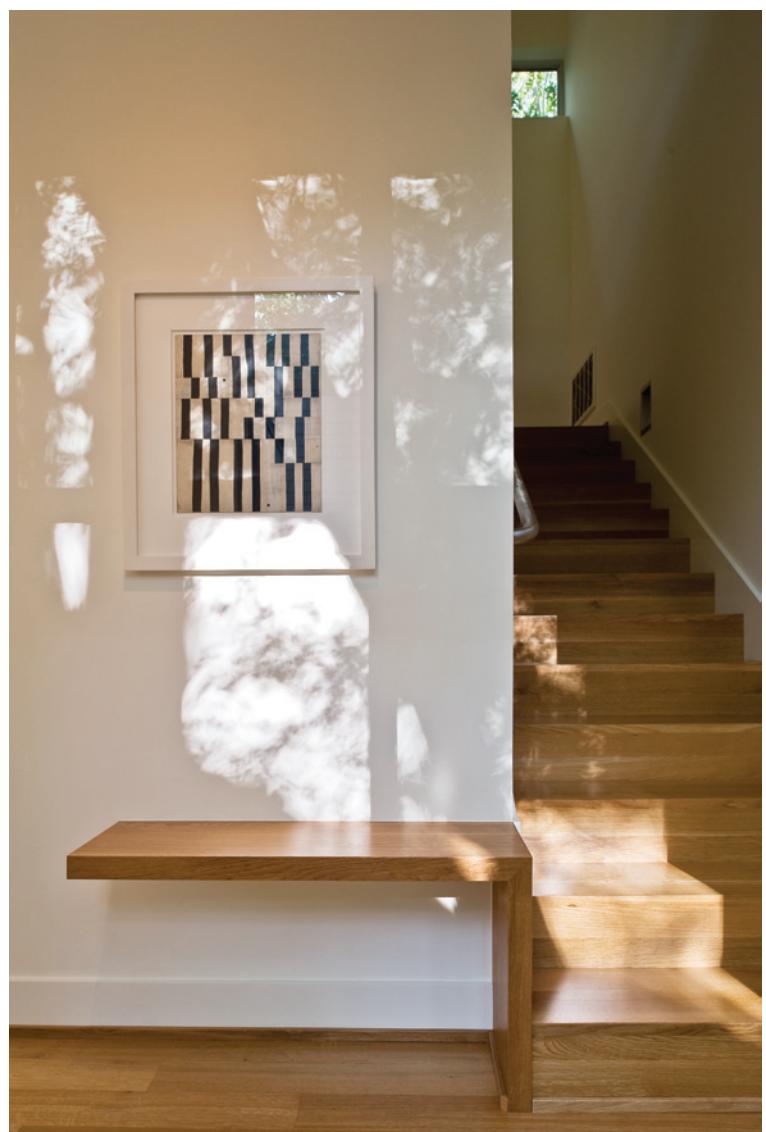
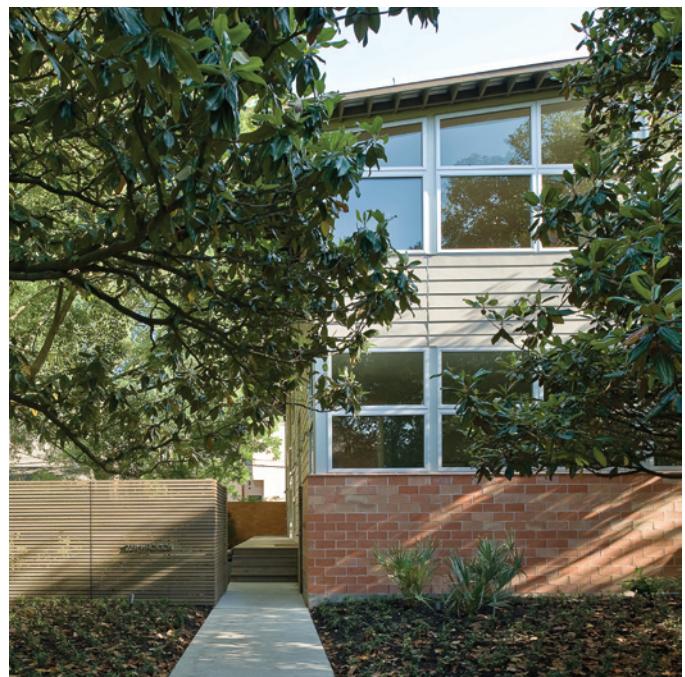
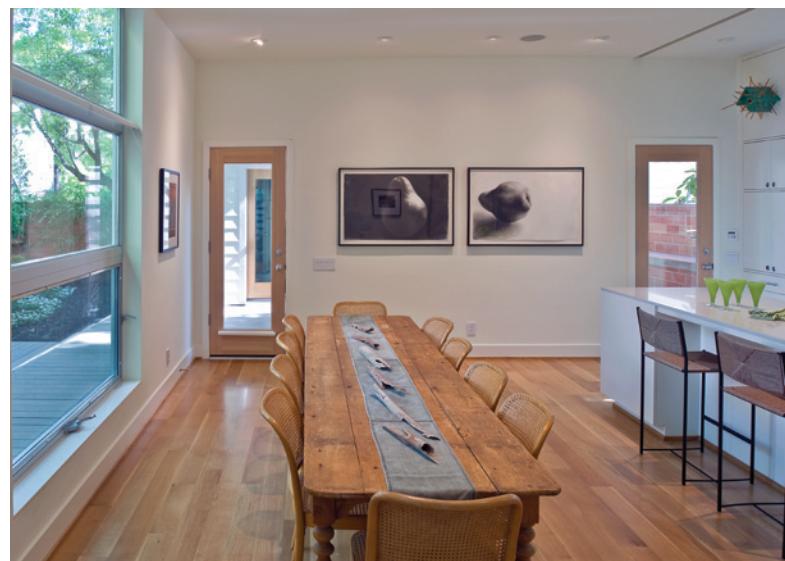
The spatial order here is linear—a measured progression of spaces, mostly one room wide, along the west edge of the site. Raised above tree roots and bordered by a porch that connects everything to the landscape on the east, the house is approached from the street on a path between two magnolias that frame a wood-screened threshold to the private garden. The house's side-entry orientation links the building's interior to the exterior along its entirety.

The primary structural element, addressing both form and climate, is the roof—a great plane extending in a simple east-west slope from alley to street setbacks—with significant overhangs on all sides. Noting rain and sun as her primary concerns, Grenader uses the Galvalume-paneled cover to unite the house and studio pieces below, channel circulation and water between building and garden, and protect the exterior walls from weather.

Live and work volumes sit below the roof in a north-south alignment, separating once to frame an 11-foot-wide outdoor room that Grenader calls the “trot,” a reference to the Texas dog-trot. Corresponding to neighbors’ flanking backyards, the trot permits the garden to literally impact the building, inserting enhanced light, views, and breezes into the heart of the project while becoming both shelter and buffer between living and working. At the second-floor level, a galvanized open-grate bridge spans the gap, offering a heightened prospect and link to the circulation scheme.

Keeping exterior materials restricted to a clay tile base supporting gray-painted fiber-cement siding, Grenader limits her architecture’s impact on the existing context—mostly two-story, 1930s-era brick and wood-sided houses. By increasing the scale of the individual elements (i.e., bigger bricks and wider siding) while decreasing the number and variety of details, she interprets the surrounding conditions in purer terms. Similarly, through the use of a pier-and-beam foundation to increase site permeability, this design reads with a lighter touch to the ground.

Interior materials are equally quiet. White or neutrally painted surfaces above oak floors create a serene backdrop to the simply rendered spaces whose





(preceding spread, left and right) A bridge from the second-floor studio leads to the residential quarters. At the northeast corner of the upper level, copious glazing welcomes in natural light and views to the neighborhood.

(this spread, clockwise from top left) The house sits perpendicular to the street. The breezeway doubles as an outdoor screening room. Grenader minimized the material palette. By incorporating built-in millwork she made the most of the available square footage. Interiors illustrate her successful editing of programmatic essentials.



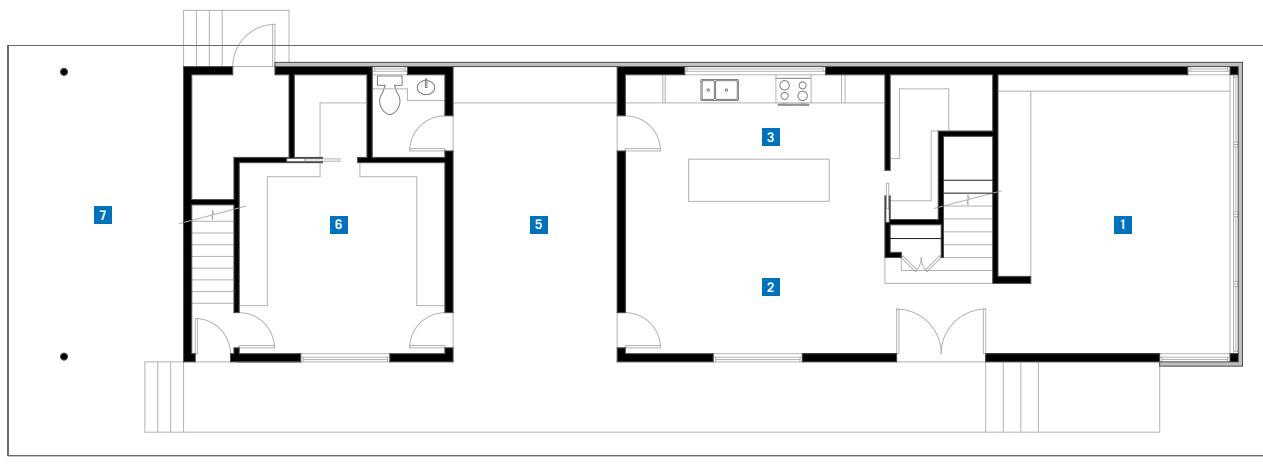
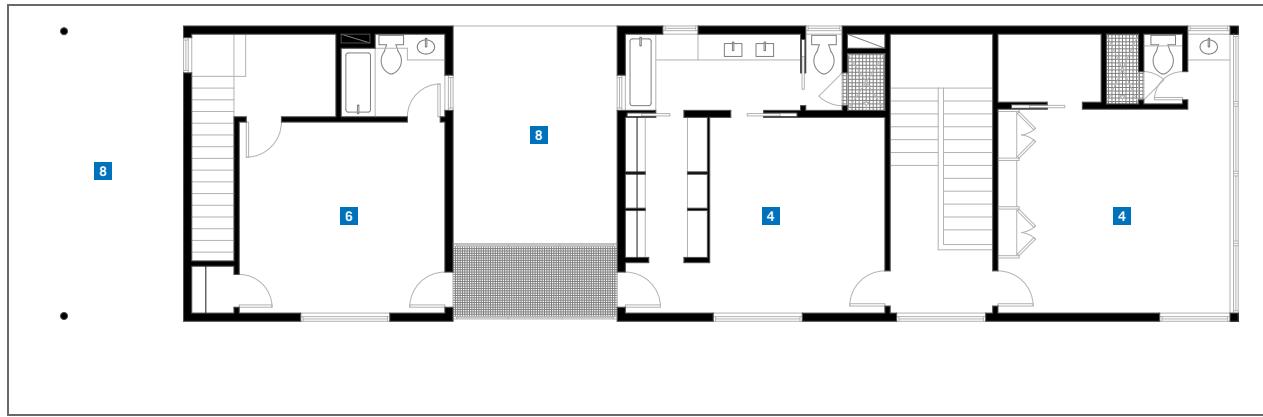


RESOURCES CLAY TILE: D'Hanis Clay Products; SOLID POLYMER FABRICATIONS: Silestone; BUILDING INSULATION: Icynene (Diversified Thermal); SIDING: James Hardie; METAL ROOFING: MBCI; ALUMINUM ENTRANCE: Vistawall (JC Glass); METAL WINDOWS: RAM Industries; TILE: DalTile; PAINT: Sherwin Williams; SHADES: The Shade Shop; SINKS AND FAUCETS: Cifial, American Standard, Kohler, Blanco (Westheimer Plumbing & Hardware); LIGHTING: ELCO, Modern Fan, Remcraft Lighting, Lutron (Lighting Unlimited)

(left) Grenader's workspace. (right page, clockwise from top) Master bath. Downstairs living room. Entry to front of house and garden.



- 1 LIVING
- 2 DINING
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 BEDROOM
- 5 PORCH
- 6 STUDIO
- 7 CARPORT
- 8 OPEN TO BELOW





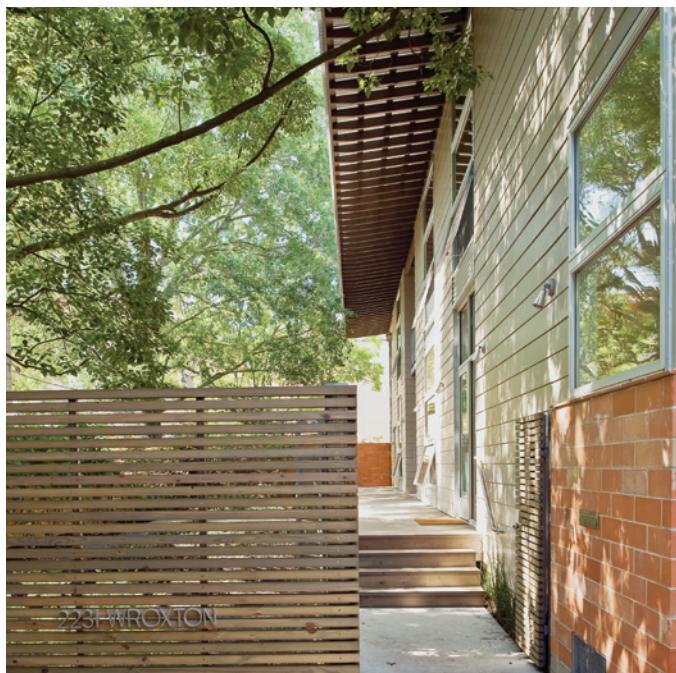
predominant features are large aluminum-framed windows. Since a stated goal was to modestly cap the built square footage – or, in her words, “building in more size than square footage” – flex-use of all spaces was essential. Grenader inserted built-in furniture elements to expand each space—in the living area a perimeter banquette provides overflow seating as well as permanent art display space; along the trot’s west edge a permanent buffet hosts a ready surface for outdoor eating; in the kitchen a sliding canvas veil conceals clutter from deferred cleanup; and a floating bench cantilevers through the entry/stairwell to serve as pantry workspace on the opposite side.

Window design and placement are well considered. On the north side, an expanse of limited-height glass opens to the magnolias and then wraps briefly to the west to balance the cooler north light. When standing at these high-sill windows, occupants can glimpse the neighborhood through the trees; when seated they see only sky and leaves, making window coverings unnecessary. On the east side, however, the windows extend much closer to the floor, increasing transparency to the garden and filtered light through the trees. Each room contains a matched and centered stack of awning windows that simplify the elevation from the exterior while giving each a specific focus.

In studios at Rice, Grenader and colleague Danny Samuels, FAIA, present design as inseparable from the act of making; as leaving the construction process open to incorporating design opportunities as they present themselves enriches the experience and the final built project. During the construction of her own house, Grenader followed this model and acknowledges the contributions of the builder and on-site craftsmen who brought their experience to the collaborative process of refining a variety of details—a favorite one being the re-use of grating in steps down to the garden level. Here water can fall from the roof in a single sheet, its path unobstructed as it is led into a rock-lined swale that encourages as much storm water as possible to be absorbed before leaving the site.

This spring, AIA Houston’s Design Awards jury recognized Grenader’s project with the only honor given in the residential architecture category. Jurors commended the clarity of its organization, the cohesive incorporation of the house into the landscape, and its ability to fully engage the exterior in its interior planning.

Val Glitsch, FAIA, practices in Houston. In collaboration with Nonya Grenader, FAIA, and Natalye Appel, FAIA, she has lectured on the architectural virtues of “Enough.”



# Solid Classicist

by JON THOMPSON





**PROJECT** The Vistana, San Antonio

**CLIENT** Vistana Ltd.

**ARCHITECT** RVK Architects ; Michael G. Imber, Architect; B&A Architects

**DESIGN TEAM** David Bomersbach, AIA; Rodney Fontana, Assoc. AIA; Gabriel Herrera; Michael Imber, FAIA; Mac White, AIA; Julie Valdez; Rick Brendler, AIA; Richard McCue; Steve Mahlmann

**CONTRACTOR** Jordan Construction

**CONSULTANTS** Blum Consulting Engineers (MEP); Campbell & Associates Consulting Engineers (structural); Insite Architects (interior); Coyle Engineering (civil); Koncept Light (lighting); Paul Avery Pools (pool); RVK Architects (landscaping); George Schroeder (metalwork artist)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Kathy Castanon, RVK Architects

*The 14-story Vistana is the first major apartment project built in downtown San Antonio in the last decade. Texas Architect asked Jon Thompson to interview Ed Cross of Cross & Co., the developer of the project, and Michael Imber, FAIA, the designer of the building's exterior. Other parties involved in the project included RVK Architects as architect of record, Insite Architects as the designer of the interiors, and B&A Architects for the interior layout of the apartments.*

**Were there difficulties in producing a building in which the interior and the exterior were farmed out to different firms?**

**MICHAEL IMBER:** We had a close partnership with RVK. We worked comfortably with them. Ed worked with RVK initially to develop the siting and functionality of the building. The project was then brought to our office to define the building exterior architecturally. Architects are all problem solvers: we like to figure out the problems from the ground up. In this case we were handed a different kind of problem which we had to articulate and resolve.

**ED CROSS:** I had asked Michael to solve three or four problems. First, I had wanted the building to be in scale with the two adjacent buildings, the medical

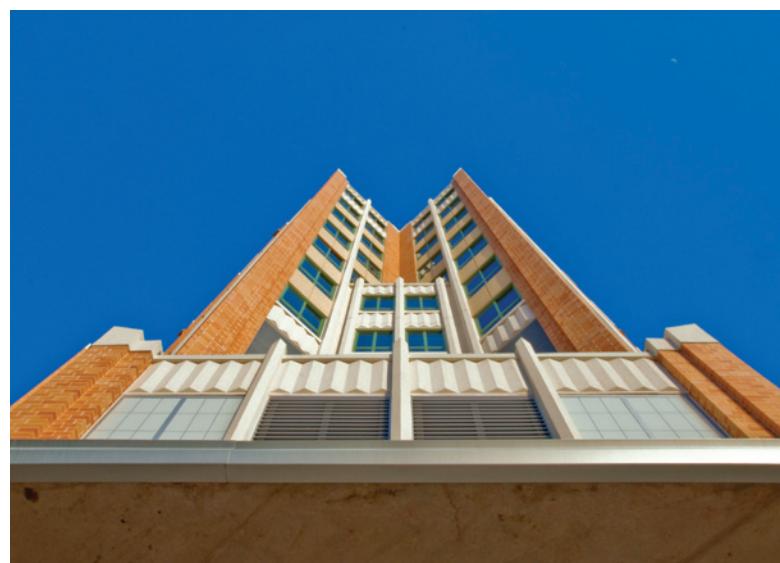
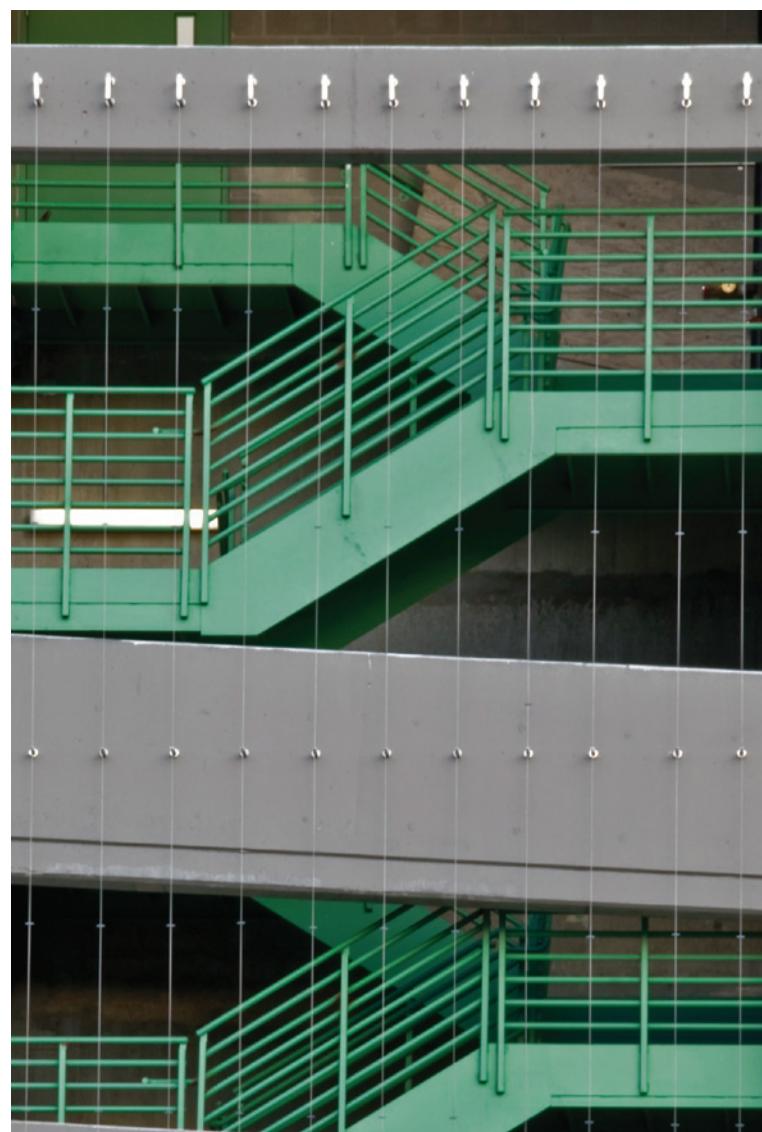
office building and the International Style Santa Rosa Hospital. When Michael got the project, we had figured out the mass but that was all we had done. What I challenged Michael to do first was to minimize the bulk. This is a big building. I wanted to avoid the effect of a beached whale. It's a 500,000-square-foot building on 14 floors. I wanted Michael to take that bulk and treat it so that it would rest lightly on the ground.

The second thing I asked of Michael was for a design that would not appear dated. You asked earlier about why I work with different architects. I really try to pick the right architect for the product. I saw this building as being a classical design with a base, shaft, and top. In San Antonio the only classicist is Michael Imber. When I talked to Michael about the exterior, I didn't tell him I wanted an Art Deco building or a Moderne building or a Grecian temple. I didn't tell him the style *per se*, I just told him I wanted a timeless building, a design that can't be dated. The third thing I told Michael, related to the timelessness, was that I wanted a masonry building. I don't think downtown San Antonio lends itself to glass buildings although that's clearly been the fad in downtown housing in every other market in the country.

MI: When Ed and RVK initially brought us the building schematic, we were surprised by the massing. It was a big building. The first thing we set out to do was minimize the impact of that bulk. First, we articulated the corners of the building so that they fold back at the ends, hence lessening its bulk.

The "C" plan was set. It was driven by the program. The building is essentially a multi-purpose building. There is retail at the base floor, four floors of parking, and an amenity deck that caps off the parking. There are certain efficiencies that go along with each of those programmatic needs. Each needs expression in the building's design—from retail to penthouse to garage, the garage being the most difficult to integrate without undermining the building's solidity.

As to the other criteria, we felt a masonry wall was completely appropriate to San Antonio. If a building is going to be timeless, it has to be integral with place. To be integral, you have to know what makes a place unique, what gives it its character. San Antonio is a unique city with a unique downtown, primarily because it's a masonry downtown, unlike Dallas or Houston or even Austin now. It's more solid in its expression. Also, until the eighties, San Antonio was expressively vertical. If you look at Alamo Savings, the Milam Building, the Emily Morgan Hotel, the Smith-Young Tower—they were iconographic San





(preceding page, left and right) Located in the northwest quadrant of downtown San Antonio, the Vistana opened earlier this year. The new 14-story apartment building's exterior shows the influence of its historic neighbors, such as the Alamo National Bank Building at far left and the green-crowned Smith-Young Tower, both built in 1929.

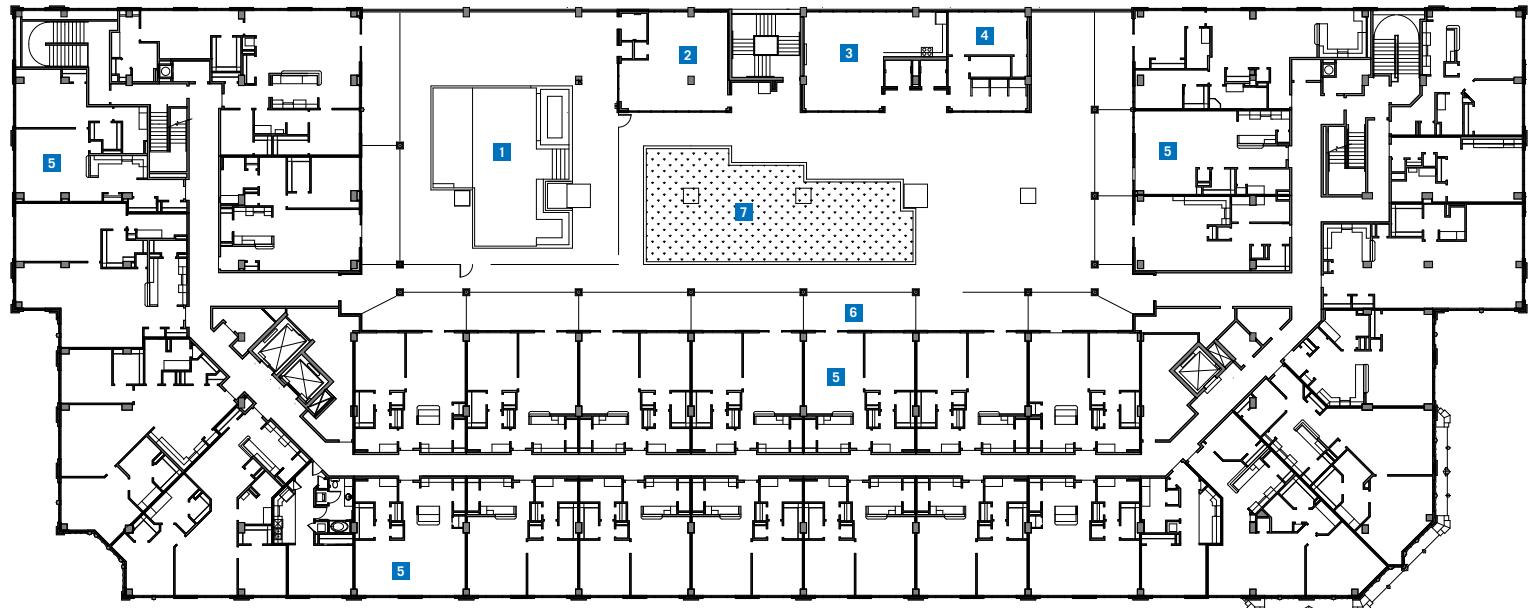
(this spread, clockwise from top left) Looking east along Commerce Street, the Vistana comprises 247 apartments and 25,000-sf of retail space. The U-shaped building features an amenities deck on its sixth floor. Seen just beyond the combined I-35 and I-10 expressway, the Vistana's massive profile anchors the western edge of downtown. A detail of the garage stairwell. At the northwest corner the building folds back to reduce the overall scale.





RESOURCES MASONRY UNITS: Acme, Pacific Clay; GRANITE: Delta Granite & Marble; ALUMINUM FRAMES/SCREENS: Express Metalwork; RAILINGS/STAIRS: American Stair Corp.; ARCH. WOODWORK: Nevamar; METAL DOORS: Amweld (American Direct); WOOD DOORS: VT Industries (American Direct); ENTRANCES/STOREFRONTS: Kawneer (Sharp Glass); METAL WINDOWS/GLASS: Thermal (Sharp Glass); PAINT: PPG; SHADES: Service Shade Shop; PRE-ENGINEERED BLDG. LIGHT GAUGE FRAMING, DIVIDER/EXTERIOR WALL PANELS: Capco Steel

(left) A conference room on the amenities level is available for tenants. (right page, clockwise from top) Ten-foot ceilings are standard in all the apartments. Each unit includes large windows. The exterior's Deco expression became a motif for the project's signage.



SIXTH FLOOR PLAN

- 1 POOL
- 2 EXERCISE ROOM
- 3 ENTERTAINMENT ROOM
- 4 CONFERENCE ROOM
- 5 APARTMENT
- 6 PATIO
- 7 TURF TERRACE



Antonio buildings. They had a very clear articulation as Gothic Revival vertical. This played in our favor with Ed wanting a brick building. If we were to articulate the brick to reflect this Gothic verticality in a more modern expression then we could create a fabric as with a woven basket that helped break down the mass and articulate this horizontal bulk. Also, the large D'hanis-colored brick references the industrial terracotta warehouses dotting downtown, lending to Cross' concept of lofts with a slight industrial edge. Levels of the building were stepped back in order to achieve an appropriate scale—at the third level in deference to the street scale of Commerce and pedestrians, and again at the penthouse level to articulate the crown of the building.

We wanted an iconographic building but primarily we wanted a building that anchored the western edge of downtown. The Vistana is not invisible. It has its own character and identity and yet it helps pull the fabric of downtown to the western edge. We envisioned Vistana as the eastern edge of Milam park, but also as downtown's western wall.

**EC:** Let's talk about the interiors, because that was as important to me as the outside. I had decided that if you wanted to live downtown, it was because you were trying to escape a traditional suburban existence. For those people, I wanted an "Oh wow" experience when they stepped into the unit. As I thought about what would produce that "wow" reaction, I decided it would be the volume of the space, so the units have 10-foot ceilings and a big window. Those windows are six feet tall by eight feet wide, the biggest we could make them. This gives a potential tenant an experience when they walk into the unit that they wouldn't get anywhere else.

#### What was the reason for the Deco tower on the main corner?

**MI:** It came about during the process of problem solving. For instance, by using brick and limiting our spandrels, we came up with a vertical pattern. The tower also expressed the verticality of San Antonio. It was an inflection at the bend in Commerce Street as well a landmark to Market Square and the Museo Alameda cater-corner from the commercial entrance of the building. I see architecture as a continuum. In no way were we trying to design Vistana as a replication of what San Antonio is. We were trying to design it as a link in the continuum from what it has been and what it will be in the future.

Thompson is an associate professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio's College of Architecture.

# Urban Complex

by BRIAN D. MCLAREN, AIA





**PROJECT** Cityville Southwestern Medical District, Dallas

**CLIENT** Inland America (formerly FirstWorthing)

**ARCHITECT** JHP Architecture/Urban Design

**DESIGN TEAM** Mike Arbour, AIA; W. Brian Keith, AIA; Carl Malcolm; Jonathan Brown; Makie Mosley

**CONTRACTOR** FirstWorthing Construction

**CONSULTANTS** Raymond L. Goodson, Jr. (structural); Schmidt & Stacy Consulting Engineers (MEP); RTKL Associates (landscape); Studio Bella Designs (interior); urban engineers group inc. (civil)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Steve Hinds; Stan Wolenski Photography

**RESOURCES** MASONRY UNITS: Texas Building Products; MASONRY VENEER ASSEMBLIES: Acme; METAL DECKING, RAILINGS, AWNINGS: Quality Ironworks; GYPSUM BOARD: American Gypsum; PREFABRICATED WOOD TRUSSES: Panel Truss; WATERPROOFING: TAMKO; BUILDING INSULATION: Guardian, Certain-Teed; METAL DOORS: Ceco Door Products; METAL WINDOWS: IBP Glass; GLASS: AGC Flat Glass North America, Atrium Windows and Doors; TILE: Interceramic; PAINT: Sherwin Williams; KITCHEN AND BATH CABINETS: Republic Industries

CITYVILLE SOUTHWEST MEDICAL CENTER EMBODIES THE PIONEER spirit. When opened in 2007, the mixed-use development shared the neighborhood with industrial brownfields, rusting steel warehouses, and a red-light district. Within this wasteland, Cityville sought to infuse a sense of the urban pedestrian experience with an ambitious mix of retail and residential buildings at the edge of Dallas' Medical Center.

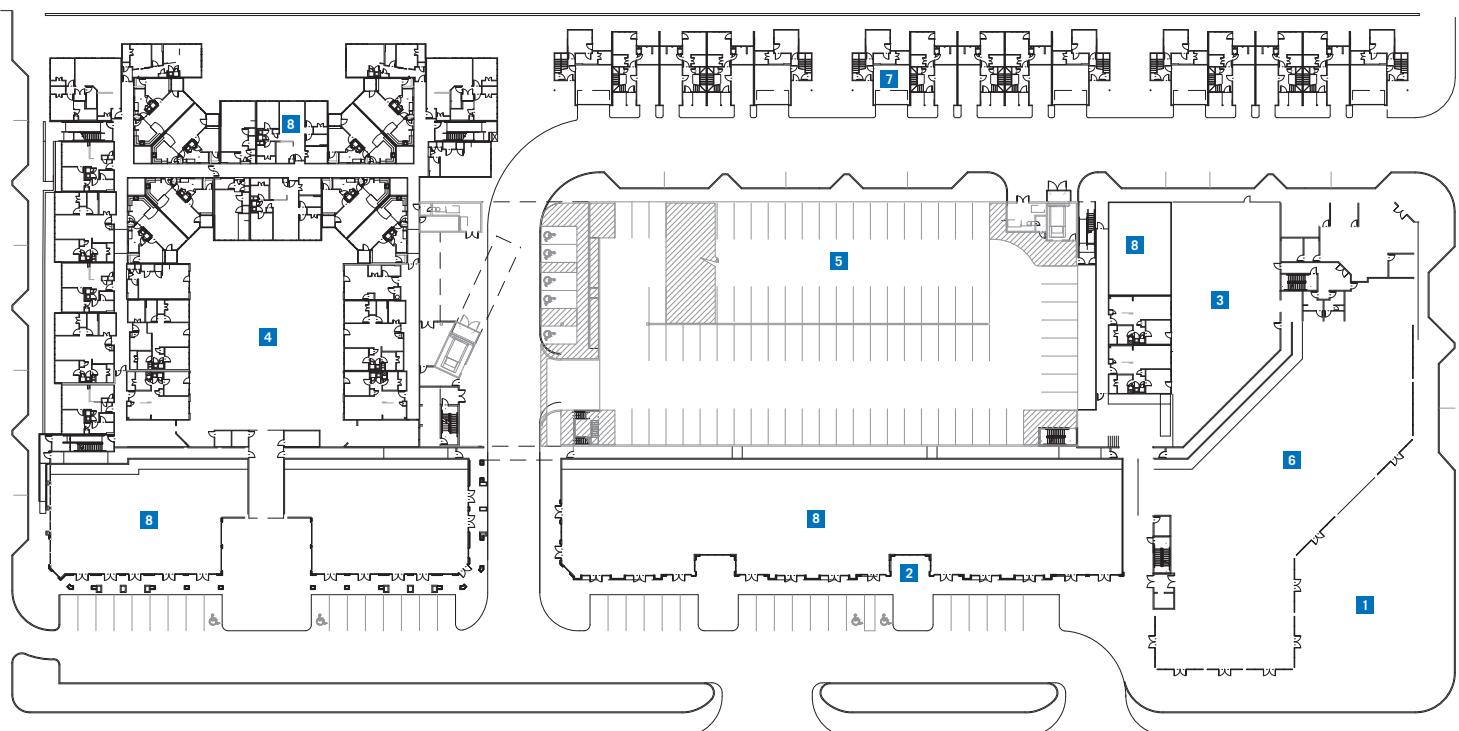
The scene has improved considerably over the past two years, but the best is still yet to come. Another urban residential complex, the Alexan Southwestern by Trammel Crow, is about to open across the street. And on the other side of Medical Center Blvd (formerly Motor Street) is the future home of the 862-bed, \$1.27 billion Parkland Hospital recently approved by Dallas County voters. The new hospital will employ over 8,000 people and will be a destination for hundreds of thousands of medical patients. Also, on the adjacent corner to the Cityville project is the Dallas Area Rapid Transit's Medical Center light rail station, set to open in late 2010. Daily ridership at the new DART facility is estimated between 4,000 and 5,000. All of these elements, along with the continued densification and gentrification of the nearby downtown, situate the Cityville project within a prominent gateway neighborhood in this part of the city.



(preceding spread, left and right) The Cityville development, located just northwest of downtown Dallas, combines 40,000-sf of retail space and an array of residential options at the expanding Medical Center. Along the east side of the 5.7-acre complex, a series of multi-level apartments jog in and out over ground-floor storefronts.

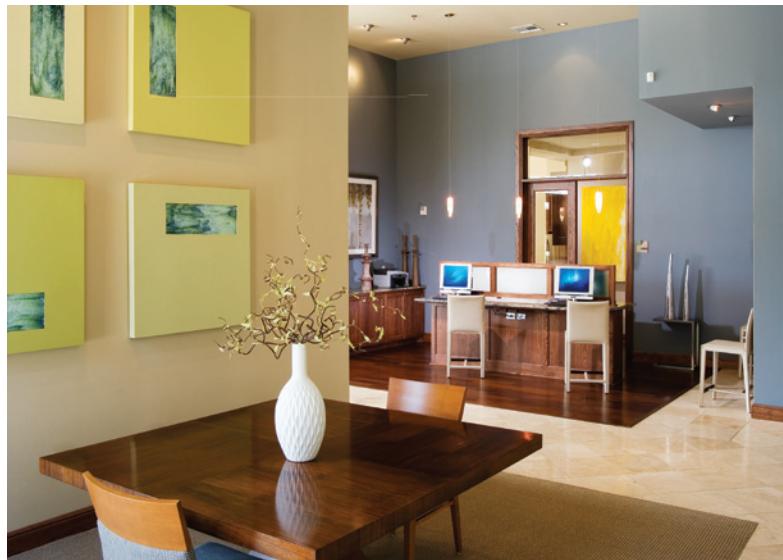
(left) The main plaza at the west corner sits across from the future DART Medical Center light-rail station where daily ridership is expected to exceed 4,000 commuters.

(right page, clockwise from top) Multi-family apartments wrap around a pool and courtyard. The residential units are designed to appeal to a range of potential occupants. Double-sided retail shops open to a smaller, triangular courtyard that features a large, free-standing fireplace and clustered seating areas.



SITE PLAN

- 1 RETAIL COURTYARD
- 2 TERRACE
- 3 COURTYARD
- 4 POOL
- 5 PARKING GARAGE
- 6 RETAIL AND MULTI-FAMILY
- 7 TOWNHOMES
- 8 MULTI-FAMILY



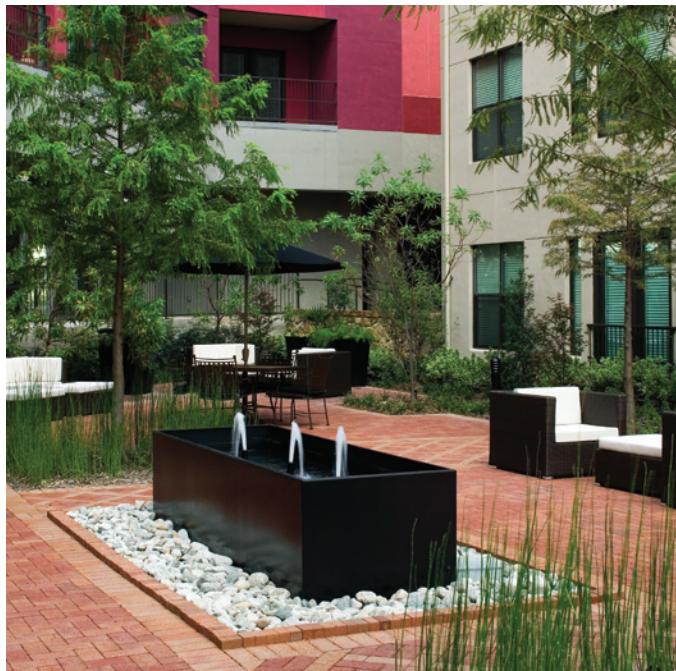
The weight of this responsibility was not lost on the owner, city officials, or the design team when initial planning was done over five years ago. Together the designers and owner worked with the municipality to create a tax increment financing (TIF) district as well as rezoning the area as a planned development (PD) that focused on the pedestrian by adding on-street parking and improving the streetscape. "Lush and inviting areas are important for attracting and retaining residents," says Mike Arbour, AIA, a principal with JHP Architecture/Urban Design, but noted, "The reality is that retail leasing is still driven by the car, so teaser parking in front of the storefronts is important."

The initial result is less lush than that rendered in most New Urbanist concept sketches—a mix of trellis mounted above portions of the storefront and sparse plantings of trees in front of the sidewalks. The hope is that retail tenants will install colorful awnings and other shading elements. A challenge with this project was to achieve a level of success in creating a vibrant pedestrian-oriented experience before the DART station or the new hospital were in place.

Cityville's product mix is unique from most multifamily developments today. Because the area had virtually no existing housing, no one was sure who would eventually live here. Therefore, the team has experimented with a combination of residential types—including townhouses, efficiencies, student housing and "soft lofts"—that vary greatly in size, style, and aesthetics. The successfully variation of the components' exterior expression represents an attempt to appeal to a wide range of potential residents.

Financial success for this project will derive from its location adjacent to the future DART station and hospital, but the creative design solutions put into the project already have resulted in rewards. As Mike Arbour notes, "We had an educated client that didn't demand maximum density. They had a target number of units that they needed to hit, but beyond that there was opportunity for us to explore a lot of things." That blank slate and the support of the owners and city officials gave the design team a chance to experiment in many areas. The outcome represents an interesting variety that has proven refreshing, especially when compared to the market's many monolithic "urban" apartments. Cityville clearly stands out with its dynamic form and creative solutions to life in the big city.

McLaren is a founding partner in Ware Architecture and a board member for the Congress for the New Urbanism—North Texas.



# Self-Contained

by ED SOLTERO, AIA





**PROJECT** Cinco Camp, Brewster County

**CLIENT** Roger Black

**ARCHITECT** Rhotenberry Wellen Architects

**DESIGN TEAM** Mark Wellen, AIA; Daniel Dominguez; Robert Reed

**CONTRACTOR** Ekstrom Construction

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Hester + Hardaway

**RESOURCES** METAL MATERIALS: Shamrock Steel; ARCHITECTURAL METAL

WORK: Distinctive Ironwork; LAMINATES: Wilsonart International (Rojo Distributors); BUILDING INSULATION: Owens Corning (Builders & Homeowners Supply); DOOR HARDWARE: Builders & Homeowners Supply; METAL ROOFING: Corrugated Metals Inc.; METAL DOORS AND WINDOWS: General Aluminum (Midwest Door & Window); PAINT: Kelly Moore; TUB AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES: Alumax (Bethlehem Glass); KITCHEN AND BATH CABINETS: Ekstrom Construction; DESIGN SOFTWARE: Autodesk (COINS – Construction Industry Solutions)

WHEN MALCOLM MCLEAN DEVISED THE NOW UBIQUITOUS METAL SHIPPING container in the 1950s, his idea transformed the cargo transport business. The movement of goods on a global scale was greatly facilitated by what became known as inter-modal steel building units. Today, as America's insatiable appetite for goods from China continues to grow and reverse trade with that country stagnates, empty containers continue to stack up at inland freight transit terminals around the U.S. The Chinese do not want them back—it's cheaper for them to fabricate new ones.

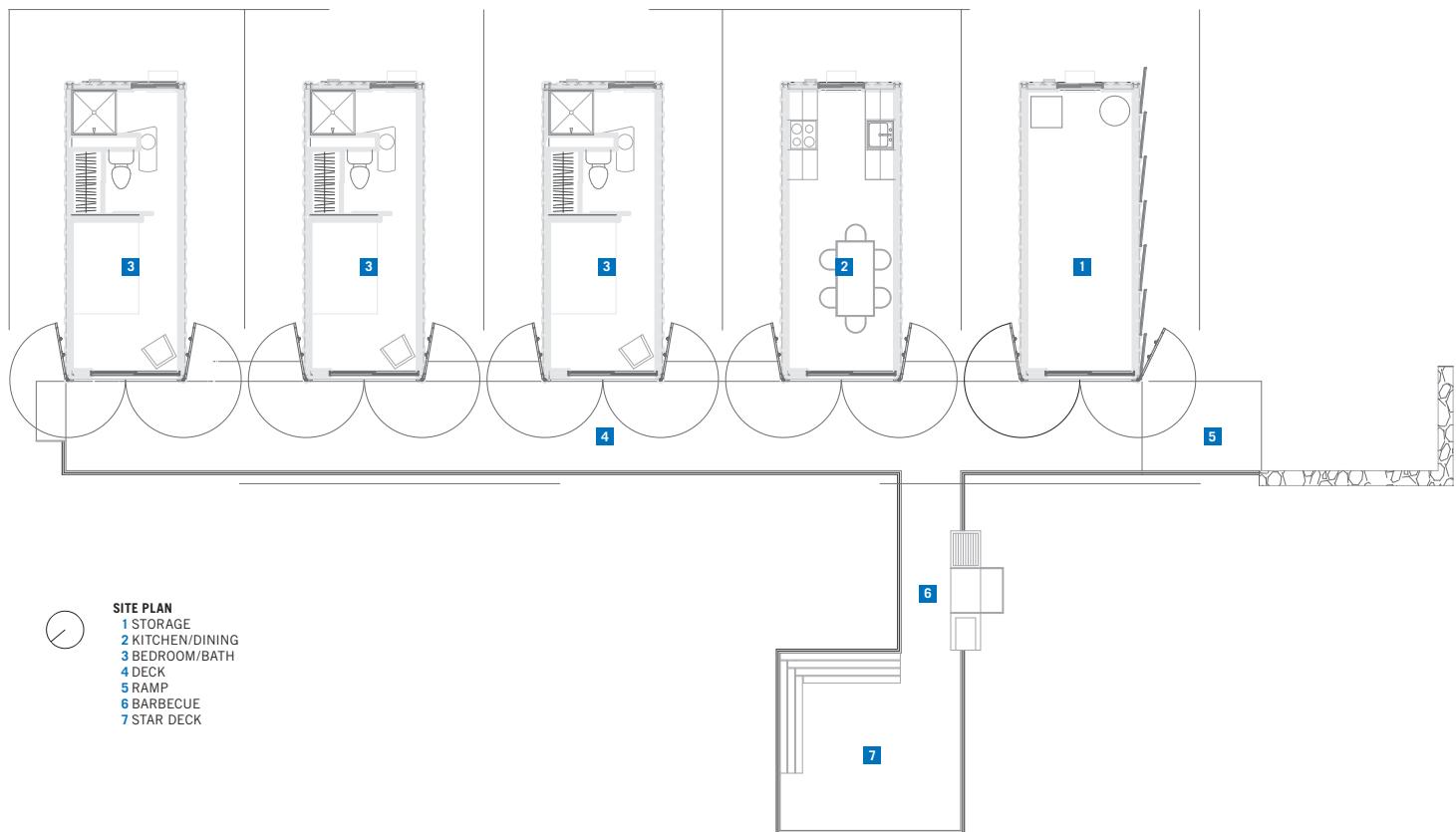
Enter Rhotenberry Wellen Architects, a Midland firm with an intriguing concept for re-using a few of those abandoned containers to create a place of respite on a remote, rugged, and dry spot in far West Texas. The owner, renowned graphic designer Roger Black, routinely revitalizes his corporate clients' venerable brands through digital media, so it was not a stretch for him to take on the task of enhancing this harsh and desolate place.

Cinco Camp comprises five 8' x 20' containers that have been sensitively sited at the foot of Castle Mountain in far-flung Brewster County. While the notion of creating an abode with the containers was a simple one to embrace, the actual feat proved quite the opposite. The units were finished out in the contractor's yard in Midland and transported 185 miles to the desert site, an unenviable task



(preceding spread, left and right) The elevated catwalk spine propels the living spaces into the environment and creates a modifying zone between the shaded units and the intense southwestern light. From a distance the containers resemble abstract sculpture set in the landscape.

(left) As additional protection from the relentless heat of the sun, the architects devised a shield of corrugated metal panels installed in a serrated pattern on the southern-most perimeter wall. (right page, clockwise from top) The metal doors of each container swing open to reveal sliding panels. A deck extends from the catwalk for outdoor dining and nighttime celestial observation. The finished interiors allow a seven-foot-wide space that can be cooled by an air conditioner or natural cross-ventilation.





for anybody unacquainted with this forbidding region. Nevertheless, the new man-made form appears as strong as the landscape yet respectful.

The architecture is deeply informed by the qualities of place, responding to the color, texture, scale, and form of the terrain and greatly amplifies its essential character. Although the individual units sit perpendicular to the contours of land, the entire composition reads as aligned parallel with it—a deliberate attempt to express the horizontality of the setting. The oxidized patina of the exterior composition further ties the project to its site.

The architects fragmented the home into five functional components: a unit equipped with a washer and dryer, a water heater, a freezer, a wireless Internet router, and storage space; a unit containing the kitchen and dining area; and three units outfitted with a bedroom and bath. The architectural elements are linked together by a steel-grate catwalk spine with a small deck (called the "star viewing platform").

To minimize the impact of construction on the fragile desert ecology, the prefabricated units are elevated above the ground on delicate steel columns. Above each unit, thin corrugated shed roofs hover to provide shade and extend over the catwalk to effectively constitute a veranda. On the west-facing wall, aluminum sliding doors were added that open the living areas to panoramic views of desert sunsets. Cross ventilation was achieved by punching holes into the eastern face of the living units to accept small, horizontal, aluminum slider windows. Another feature to help the architecture breathe is a series of corrugated-steel deck panels affixed to the south wall of the south-facing unit.

The interior of the units was furred out to incorporate insulation in the perimeter walls. A simple palette consists of maple-colored high density fiberboard throughout. A light partition with a thin sliding door separates the sleeping areas from the bathing and dressing section. Cabinetry and furnishings were kept minimal, further adding to the airiness and cheeriness of each seven-foot-wide component.

Even if the prefabricated rooms are small, any feelings of being cramped quickly dissipate as one steps outside into the seemingly endless expanse. The vastness of the views and big, open sky are but a few of the gifts that this home will grant Roger Black. It will be lovely to hear the rain and the orchestral music of the wind sweeping across the plains, and above all to be steeped in serenity. Nothing more is needed.

Soltero is a *TA* contributing editor and the director of planning and construction at UT El Paso.

# Canyon Village

by LAWRENCE CONNOLLY, AIA





**PROJECT** St. Edward's Residence Hall and Dining Facility, Austin  
**CLIENT** St. Edward's University

**ARCHITECT** Alejandro Aravena; Cotera+Reed Architects

**DESIGN TEAM** Ricardo Torrejon; Philip Reed; Juan Cotera; Tiffani Erdmanczyk; Adam Pyrek; Travis Hughbanks; Joyce Chen; Leyla Shams

**CONTRACTOR** Flintco; Flynn Construction

**CONSULTANTS** HS&A (project mgmt/owner rep); Datum Engineers (structural); ACR Engineering (MEP base bldg); Energy Engineering Associates (MEP first floor); Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates (waterproofing); Bury+Partners (civil); Sasaki Associates (landscape); RVI Planning (associate landscape architect); Dickensheets Design Associates (acoustics); Landmark Restaurant Equipment and Design (food service); Flying Fish Design (arch. model)

**PHOTOGRAPHERS** Cristobal Palma Photography; Andy Mattern, Artimbo.com

FOR ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY TO ACHIEVE A DESIRED NATIONAL PROMINENCE as an institution of higher learning, President George E. Martin set out in 2001 to double the student enrollment to 4,000 by 2010. Martin knew that would require significant capital improvements, so he commissioned Philadelphia's H2L2 to masterplan the 498-acre hilltop campus. That master plan, updated in 2005 by the Boston office of Sasaki Associates, located five new residence halls and nine additional academic buildings for the independent Catholic university. (See the news article in the November/December 2006 *Texas Architect*.)

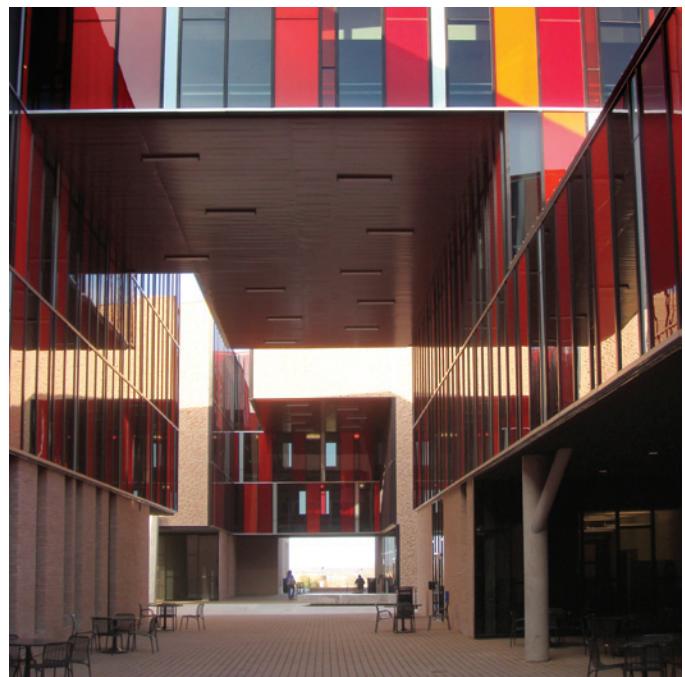
All of the proposed residence halls are now built, and they demonstrate the broad range of architectural acceptance within Sasaki's master plan. Opened in 2003 and located in the heart of campus, the traditionally patterned Basel Moreau Hall and Jacques Dujarié Hall were designed by Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company of Norfolk, Virginia. Both reflect the nineteenth-century Romanesque Revival style of Nicholas Clayton's nearby Main Building (1888) and Holy Cross Hall (1905).

At the other end of the stylistic spectrum are the other three new residence halls built as a complex six years later. Clearly a modern trio, Lady Bird Johnson Hall, Le Mans Hall, and Edmond Hunt Hall are known collectively as a "residential village." Actually, the 119,000-sf complex is a mixed-use project with dorm

rooms located on the upper three floors. The ground-floor spaces contain two eating venues, a convenience store, and a health/counseling center. Each of the three narrow four-story halls also has its own contiguous grass terrace located on its respective north or east sides. The students share two large communal courtyards, with some of the outdoor areas open to the sky and some partially shielded from the sun by one- and three-story connections and cantilevered segments of the buildings. These dramatic ceilings effectively form a shady glass canyon that serve as a town square for the east side of campus.

Designed by Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena, teamed with Cotera+Reed of Austin, the dormitory complex is his first project in the United States. Aravena, appointed this year to a seat on the Pritzker Prize jury, won the commission through an architect selection process that included visits to see his built work in Chile. He spoke during his interview about creating opportunities for student interaction, an objective set by St. Edward's trustees as a way to enrich the college experience. Bringing students together in casual settings also was seen as a way to imbue dorm life with the values and traditions of Catholic heritage. This planned interaction is evident from spaces such as the third-floor laundry room where long and unexpected sight lines visually connect occupants with activities in the courtyard below. Other points of random confluence are designed inside and outside the buildings.

The brick envelope of the complex is multi-faceted and non-orthogonal in three dimensions – angled in plan and chamfered in elevation as well as in section – and the sculptural effect reduces the overall massiveness of the three narrow halls. The masonry exterior corresponds with the architect's description of the project as a geode and that aptly characterizes the craggy outer walls faced with broken header brick. The exterior's dark, heat-absorbing glass further supports the metaphor by making the buildings seem opaque and solid while inconspicuously affording transparency through its irregular tall and long fenestration. And like the inside of a geode, window walls at the interior of the village appear as crystals that yield a softer and translucent effect. These three-story, inward-facing walls of multi-colored glazing create a vibrant connection for occupants, with large areas of glass that signify gathering places seemingly pushing the volumes outward over the courtyards below. There are five types of glass in the interior window walls – two transparent and three opaque – that together with black mullions resemble an elongated De Stijl composition. The transparent types are the dark, heat-absorbing kind





(preceding spread, left and right) Likening his design for the dormitory complex as geode, Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena clad some exterior surfaces with broken header bricks. The polychromatic curtainwall facing the courtyard also alludes to the mineral metaphor.

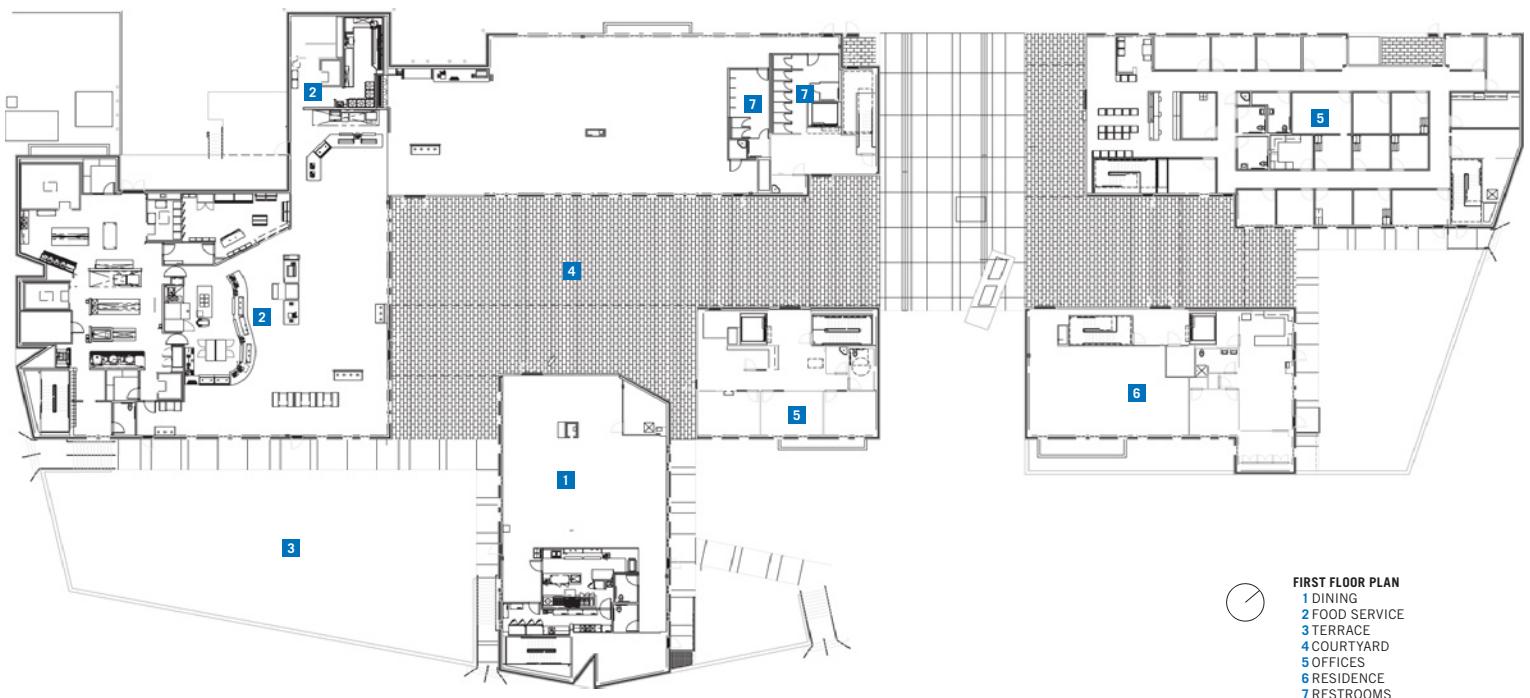
(this spread, clockwise from top left) The sheltered courtyard serves as a town square and attracts student, faculty, and staff from all parts of the university campus. The three-building complex, shown here from the south, represents a departure from the university's traditional architecture. A glimpse of the roof demonstrates how Aravena acknowledged the red tile that crowns St. Edward's iconic Main Building, designed by Nicholas Clayton and built in 1888. Red panels in the window wall also references Clayton's historic edifice. Narrow fenestration minimizes solar heat gain while still allowing views to the outdoors from dormitory rooms and public spaces.





RESOURCES ARCH. WOODWORK: Millwork Services (Triton Industries); LAMINATES: Wilsonart Intl.; WATERPROOFING/WATER REPELLENTS: Grace Construction Products; METAL/PREFAB ROOFING: Petersen Aluminum; METAL DOORS/HARDWARE: American Direct; WOOD DOORS: VT Industries (American Direct); ENTRANCES/STOREFRONTS/GLASS/GLAZED CURTAINWALL: Accura Systems; FURNITURE: Southwest Contract

(left) Narrow windows in the residential units minimize solar heat gain yet offer views to the outdoors. (right page, clockwise from top) The architect endowed the project with generous sight lines that connect the interior spaces with activities in the courtyard. The composition of glass panes in varying colors add visual interest both inside and outside the buildings. St. Edward's signature red enlivens common areas inside the dormitory complex.





also used on the perimeter of the village and the red-tinted glass used only on the courtyard side. The three types of opaque glass – white and two shades of red – resemble the narrow color range of a geode. Furnishings in the common areas repeat the red hues of the fenestration.

The color red is a significant part of the campus palette and ties directly to the red tile roofs of St. Edward's historic buildings. In fact, the trustees specifically asked Aravena for a red roof and he dutifully provided one, albeit in standing-seam metal and barely discernible from the ground save for a very thin red fascia that hints at the top surface. Aravena applied the signature hue to fenestration in a four-level parking garage completed in 2008 and located in the far eastern corner of the campus. Planned to accommodate commuter students, the design similarly stands out from the university's more traditional architecture.

The residential village has pedestrian-friendly view corridors that facilitate campus wayfinding. The principal corridor that bisects the village is also the direct path between the student apartments on the eastern-most side of campus and the academic buildings located at the center of the hilltop. This wide pedestrian walkway provides an unobstructed grand view of Clayton's Main Building. The long north face of Moore Ruble Yudell's recently completed Natural Science Center across the street to the west neatly aligns with the north face of Hunt and Le Mans Halls and further channels the pedestrian's view to the iconic Main Building.

The other view from the village courtyard is the vista to downtown Austin that becomes panoramic when seen from the less restrictive north terrace vantage point. These corridors also provide comfortable outdoor spaces during the warmer months because they pull air through the breezeways that help cool the courtyard and terraces. The unfavorable north-south solar orientation of the village's buildings is mitigated by recessed, narrow, and heat-absorbing glazing.

St. Edward's leadership proudly proclaims the new residential village as a landmark structure. While Aravena may have intended to design a background building, the complex is decidedly non-traditional in appearance yet functions to provide important institutional requirements for the entire campus population. Given the university's goal of improving college life at St. Edward's, the residential village is an appealing campus improvement that advances its strategy to become one of the best small colleges in the U.S.

A *TA* contributing editor, the writer is the principal of Connolly Architects in Austin.

# Informed by the Land

by DROR BALDINGER, AIA





PROJECT Hill Country River Ranch, Texas Hill Country

CLIENT withheld

**ARCHITECT** Craig McMahon Architects; Studio Industrielle (associated design firm)

**DESIGN TEAM** Craig McMahon, AIA; Billy Johnson, Assoc. AIA; Elizabeth Haynes; Ilsa Korte; Jord Baker; Itzel Luna

CONTRACTOR: Studio Industrielle

**CONSULTANTS** Rialto Studio (landscape architect); Structural Design Consulting (structural); Anna Meyers Interiors (interior); Southwest Mechanical Services (HVAC, geothermal)

PHOTOGRAPHER Chris Cooper Photography

HAVING NEVER BEFORE VISITED THE HILL COUNTRY, THE FUTURE OWNERS WERE charmed by the natural beauty of the site where they eventually would build their house. Majestic oaks frame the views of distant farmland as the 350-acre property drops a 100 feet to the Guadalupe River.

The crescent-shaped site, bordered on the west by a farm-to-market road and on the east by the river, rises from flat pasture land on its southern edge to a high point near the center of the tract. Panoramas eastward to the Guadalupe and the countryside beyond are spectacular.

An exhaustive process of site analysis revealed five promising opportunities to locate the house. The guiding criteria in all the analyses were consistent: maximizing the views and the southeast exposure to capture prevailing winds while minimizing any disturbance of the existing trees. Ultimately, these rigorous studies shaped the design *parti*. The realized scheme located the main portion of the house – “the main living pavilion” – near the tallest and possibly the oldest grouping of oaks.

The *parti* diagram can be drawn as a line tracing a contour edge, with one-room-wide structures positioned on either side. In the built structure, the line is expressed as a wall of native stone weaving its way along the length of the house, changing directions as required to preserve and highlight groves

of trees and open vistas, and allowing the prevailing southeastern breezes to flow through the house during the hottest parts of the summer months.

Programmatically, the house consists of four structures connected by glazed passageways: a guest pavilion with its own separate entry and balcony; a utility pavilion combining parking, a mudroom, and an office; the main living pavilion containing a kitchen, a large living room, and a library; and the master suite pavilion. Though physically linked, they appear to be independent of each other, transforming the 6,000-sf house into a compound of small-scaled, shed-roofed structures loosely defining a courtyard.

The glazed passageways provide important transitions in the spatial organization of the house. Since the pavilions are self-contained and rigid rectangular volumes, the passageways can be seen as the elbows allowing the plan to rotate and shift along the contour line. The strategy of connecting the pavilions with these narrow corridors eliminates wasted space and reduced the home's overall footprint, allowing the architects to weave the structures through the trees.

The expression of the house is clearly vernacular, relying heavily on richly developed local architectural traditions brought from Germany and Mexico but adapted by earlier settlers to the Hill Country climate. The palette of materials includes limestone walls, standing-seam metal roofs, large expanses of glass shaded by long overhangs, and arbors of weathering steel. These components are assembled in simple and sensible details. The pavilions were oriented to avoid the harsh western sun, with extended eaves positioned to block summertime exposure yet allow more natural light during winter to warm the stone walls and wood floors.

Because architecture is more than just assemblage of materials, however appropriate and expressive of local tradition, it is the responsibility of the architect to capture the spirit of "the place" and to physically convey the intangible qualities of the program and the site. The architect has done just that, as becomes immediately evident when one turns off the farm-to-market road and onto a meandering narrow road leading to the house. The first glimpse of the house reveals only a limestone plane, unassuming yet inviting, that forms the entry court. To the right is the guest pavilion and ahead is a pivoting steel gate, announcing the entry to the house. However, crossing the gate's threshold does not take one into an enclosed space. Instead, one enters a tranquil courtyard that opens to wide vistas. An arbor overhead follows the edge of the courtyard toward the main living pavilion placed carefully in front of a spreading oak tree,





(preceding spread, left and right) Shaded by weathering steel pergola, an exterior walkway connects the family residence with the guest quarters. Deep overhangs shield the glazing along the southwestern elevation of the main house.

(this spread, clockwise from top left) By breaking up the overall plan into four separate pavilions the architects weaved the components through the site's existing live oaks. The guest house is located at a distance from the main residence to allow self-contained privacy. At the center of the family home is a large lodge-like room oriented for panoramic views of the Hill Country. Enclosed passageways link the three pavilions that comprise the main house. Visitors have their own private entrance to the guest quarters .





RESOURCES POOL: Land Design; POND: Stonescapes; METAL MATERIALS: York Creek Outfitters; GRANITE: M&M Marble; METAL OVERHAND BRACKETS, RAILINGS: Studio Industrielle; LUMBER: Buie Lumber, Lucas Cedar; PREFABRICATED STRUCTURAL WOOD: Buie Lumber; ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK: Lucas Cedar; BUILDING INSULATION: Icynene (Beicker Insealation); SIDING: Lucas Cedar; WOOD DOORS AND WINDOWS: Kolbe Windows & Doors; WOOD CEILINGS: Lucas Cedar; PAINT: Sherwin Williams; LAMINATES AND MANUFACTURED CASEWORK: J.D. Steves

(left) The master bedroom comprises a separate pavilion designed with a transparency that blurs the distinction between interior and exterior space. (right page, clockwise from top) The room combines the illusion of outdoor living with all the comforts of home. The main living pavilion features materials reminiscent of local architectural traditions. The spatial ambiguity of the design heightens the experience of dining in the main pavilion.





a natural focal point and a marker on the site. In its center section, the pavilion is transparent, inviting nature to flow freely into the house.

As I sat down to enjoy the space, with its alternating rhythm of the large windows, the simply detailed coffered wood ceiling, and the visibly projecting overhangs, I recalled the story told about Frank Lloyd Wright's first visit to Philip Johnson's Glass House. Wright turned to Johnson and asked, "Philip, are we inside or outside?" Here, too, the ambiguity of the space is absorbing.

The master suite pavilion is located just beyond the main living pavilion. Carefully nestled under a high canopy of trees, it conveys the same clarity and order as the rest of the pavilions, with the added feature that its main space, the sleeping area, is essentially a glazed porch. Again, in this calm and beautifully proportioned space, the boundaries between the inside and the outside gracefully dissolve.

Compositionally, the pavilion is simple and evident. A metal shed roof is supported on three sides by an open wood framework, in-filled with large sheets of glass that have low, operable windows. The roof's fourth and highest side is raised above the limestone wall and slightly overhangs it. In the gap between the top of the wall and the interior wood ceiling, operable windows are placed to draw and exhaust the rising warm air, naturally cooling the room. Against the mass of the limestone wall, the transparent wood and glass structure appears light and delicate, integrating with the landscape as a reminder of the architects' intent to create flowing spatial connectivity to the outdoors.

As the 10-month design phase drew to a close, the owner made an additional and unexpected request of the architects. "Build it," he said, with literal intent, and so thrust the architects into the role of first-time builder.

Constructed as thoughtfully as it was designed, the house exhibits a reverence for local traditions and a knowing ease with its picturesque surroundings.

Dror Baldinger, AIA, is director of design at Marmon Mok Architecture in San Antonio.



Cullen Eye Institute, Kirksey Architects

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## PROJECT Center for the Intrepid, San Antonio

CLIENT National Armed Forces Physical Rehabilitation Center, Brooke Army Medical Center

ARCHITECT SmithGroup

DESIGN TEAM Phil Tobey, FAIA; Bill Kline, AIA; Lora Schwartz, AIA; Cheryl Brown, IIDA; Rodrigo Manriquez; Mary Jukuri, ASLA

CONTRACTOR Skanska USA Building

CONSULTANTS Cagley & Associates (structural); SmithGroup (interior); Syska Hennessy Group (MEPF); Skanska USA Building (construction manager); Counsilman-Hunsaker (pool); Koffel (code); Heller & Metzger (specification); JJR SmithGroup (landscape); SmithGroup (lighting, equipment); Garcia & Wright (civil); Plaza Construction Corp. (owner's representative)

PHOTOGRAPHER Timothy Hursley

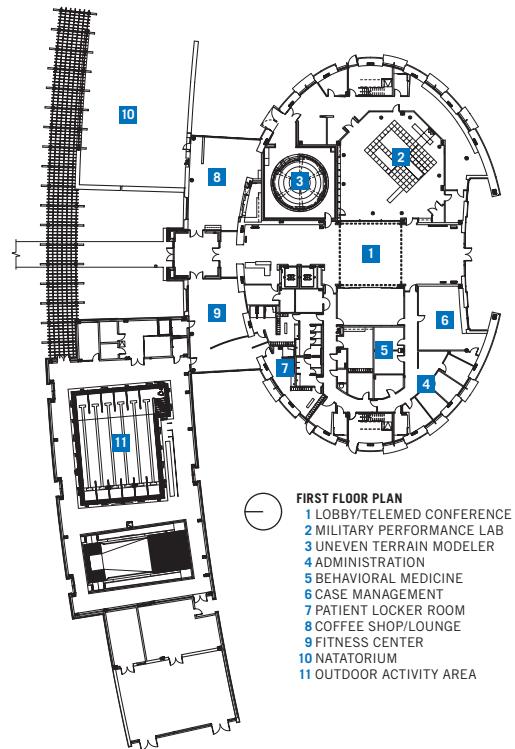
RESOURCES CURTAIN WALL: Kawneer; EXTERIOR CLADDING: Cold Spring Granite; WINDOWS: Viracon; ROOFING SYSTEM: Berridge, Sarnafil, Tremco; INSULATION: Owens Corning; ELEVATORS AND ESCALATORS: ThyssenKrupp; CEILINGS: Armstrong; DOORS: Mohawk; CARPET: Shaw, Monterey, C&A; PLUMBING FIXTURES: Kohler; TILE: DalTile; LIGHTING CONTROLS: Lutron; ENERGY MANAGEMENT CONTROLS: Johnson Controls; SECURITY AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS: Simplex

# Center for the Intrepid



The 65,000-sf Center for the Intrepid, designed by SmithGroup is equipped with the most sophisticated amputee rehabilitation technology available—virtual reality, robotics, and simulators. The four-story building is an elliptical shape, fusing the client's desire for a monumental building with the need for a state-of-the-art facility to hold complex functions within. The building's rose granite exterior is seated firmly on a base of black granite, portraying the idea of permanence. Triple-height windows punctuate the exterior granite while a capping band of clerestory windows light the interior of the space. This abundance of interior natural light is utilized by placing rehabilitation activities around the outer edge of the building. Having been named for both a WWII aircraft carrier as well as those who are defined by resolute fearlessness, fortitude, and endurance, the new rehabilitation center acts as more than just a healthcare facility: it is also a monument to those who have become patients there.

SUSAN BUTLER



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## Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas – New Family Center

**PROJECT** Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas New Family Center

**CLIENT** Baylor Healthcare System and CB Richard Ellis

**ARCHITECT** HDR Architecture

**DESIGN TEAM** Jim Henry, AIA; Kevin Lynch; Cradle Davis; Darius Shroff, AIA; Elmarko Garner

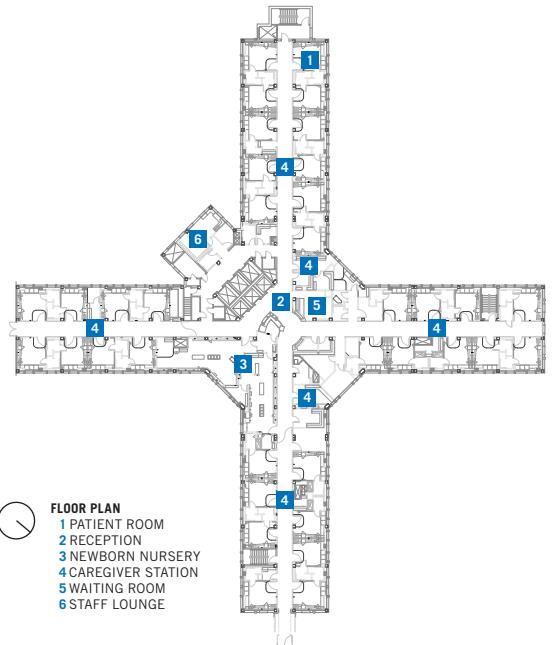
**CONTRACTOR** MEDCO Construction

**CONSULTANTS** Raymond L. Goodson, Jr. (structural); Meinhardt Consulting Engineers (MEP)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Mark Trew Photography

**RESOURCES** WATER DISPLAYS: Harmonic Environments; LAMINATES: Wilsonart International; SOLID POLYMER FABRICATIONS: Dupont Corian; DECORATIVE POLYMER FABRICATIONS: 3Form; GLASS: Guardian (Dallas Glass & Door); TILE: American Tile Supply, Horizon Italian Tile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: USG; RESILIENT TILE FLOORING: Mannington; VINYL PLANK FLOORING: Toli; BROADLOOM CARPET: Patcraft Design Weave; PAINT: Sherwin Williams; VINYL WALL COVERING: Koroseal; SHADES: MechoShade; DESIGN SOFTWARE: Autodesk (Avatech Solutions); GOOGLE; ADOBE SYSTEMS

Located on the seventh floor of Baylor University Medical Center's Truett Tower in Dallas, the New Family Center is a 22,000-sf renovation specializing in postpartum healthcare services. Designed by HDR Architecture and completed in December 2008, the facility (with 36 private rooms, redesigned nurses stations, nursery, and lactation lounge) is geared for both efficiency and relaxing recovery. With an emphasis on wellness, the Center has the feel of a spa. This was achieved by incorporating calming elements within less cluttered, open spaces. Taking cues from the nearby urban environment, the design utilizes materials such as slate tiling, wood flooring, and muted natural hues. Decentralized pods in close proximity to patient rooms replace a central nurses station. In patient rooms all medical devices have been hidden from view inside a custom headwall that acts as a central organizer. A daybed is provided for accompanying family, as well as hidden linen compartments and other personal storage space. Though redesigning a 50-year-old building to fulfill the needs of a modern healthcare facility was a challenge, with design cues taken from loft apartments and cruise ships, the completed project represents a space that can be changed to meet the needs of mothers and nurses alike.



SUSAN BUTLER



# Bridging the Gap

Abundant glazing options call for greater knowledge

by MEGAN HEADLEY

*Adapted with permission, this article originally appeared in the April 2009 issue of USGlass.*

We'll admit it, there's a lot more to a building than just the glass. And while we as an industry are charged with knowing the ins and outs of all the countless types of glass products available—architects are being overwhelmed by the need to know so much more.

"They need to know 30 or 40 trades," points out Brian Hale, Sr., president of Hale Glass in Placentia, Calif.

Alissa Schmidt, architectural design associate at Viracon in Owatonna, Minn., agrees. "Glass is only one of many thousands of products that architectural students must grasp while in school," she says, adding, "so we often offer basic courses for new architects to help bridge this gap. Even experienced architects need more in-depth information as glass fabrication technology is becoming increasingly complex. New energy requirements, changing codes, and aesthetic preferences have given birth to many new glazing options, but such sophistication requires greater knowledge."

That's why we give them the benefit of the doubt. After all, whose fault is it if these problems keep reoccurring in the drawings you see? Is it the architect's for not knowing the intricacies of the glass he's detailing—or the glass suppliers and installers for not teaching him?

## Know Your Products

Jay Meiries, who handles architectural sales for Vitro America's location in Farmers Branch, Texas, recalls at least one recent set of specifications that listed a glass product that hadn't been manufactured in about a decade.

"These architects are ... basically clicking and pasting specifications from companies that aren't even in business anymore," he says.

Hale adds that he sees specifications that don't coincide with the plans. "Often they'll go and list four or five different glass colors that don't even match the drawings in the specification. So they're buying a spec and they're not cleaning it up to make it job-specific, they're just sending it out there and that confuses everybody. The specs say one thing and the plans say something else," Hale says.

"The confusion not only prolongs the specification process, but it adds to the costs," Meiries says. He adds, "It's not their fault, and that's the bad thing. It's us as fabricators, it's us as manufacturers that aren't getting out there and giving the architects the education they need."

Sometimes the problem isn't so much listing outdated products, but listing a limited number of products.

"I wish they knew the disservice they do to their customers when they have a proprietary specification," says Max Perilstein, vice president of marketing of Arch Aluminum and Glass Co. in Tamarac, Fla. "By only listing one item, they limit the playing field dramatically and possibly keep out better products that could be acquired more economically. This is especially bothersome on schools where money is tight."

That's an area where the glazing contractor may help out, says Phil Delise, vice president of Massey's Plate Glass & Aluminum, a glazing contractor in Branford, Conn.

"We have to go by the specifications," he says, but adds, "If there's something in there that we feel that we have a better way of doing we can offer, we do a lot of voluntary alternates at the time of the bid."

Guiding this process is a part of the contractor's job, after all, says Steve Burnett, a director at Seattle location of glazing contractor Walters & Wolf.

"Once we see their specification of the product we help guide that process ... And from a cost standpoint we'll often look at a product they're specifying and, if we can match that product with a similar product of a lower cost, we'll offer those options," Burnett says. "At times they specify a product that we know doesn't work technically so we deal with that. We're always the party that decides whether it's tempered or heat-strengthened. There's always code issues that we need to deal with."

Sometimes, too, when architects specify a product that they want—it may not be the product they think they want. The goal, of course, is to discover this before the project is complete ...

Chris Dolan, director of commercial glass products for Guardian Glass Group in Auburn Hills, Mich., explains that when Guardian relaunched its SunGuard architectural glass program two years ago the company did extensive market research and learned "how difficult it is for architects to know how glass is going to look on the façade of the building."

Dolan explains, "Typically glass samples are viewed indoors in an artificial light setting. The problem is this doesn't really show you what glass is going to look like outside." He advises showing off a sample outside to see how it looks in natural light, or otherwise looking at the glass at a slight angle against a dark background.

"It's quite complicated how light plays off glass and how it looks so different in natural light conditions," Dolan says. "It's an educational process that we go through every day."

### Allowing in Light—and Heat

Architects are asking questions about glass because it's a material with which they love to work. "They like to design with glass, they like to bring the light in, it gives them design flexibility," Dolan says. "And related to that, we do hear things like 'What's the highest light transmission product you can give to me?'"

Which, ironically enough, leads to occasions where too much glass proves to be a problem.

"I wish architects knew that less light transmission may be better than more light transmission," Dolan says. "Some architects have the opinion that the higher the light transmission the better the glazing. In some cases that's true ... but the higher light transmission brings heat with it, it also brings glare."

It's a great plan to use natural daylighting over artificial lighting to reduce the costs of electricity. But what happens when the room is too bright? Dolan points to studies that have shown that once the blinds are closed, they're more likely than not going to stay that way. So much for all of that glass.

Sometimes it's a good thing to have that high light transmission, Dolan admits, but quickly

adds, "Really 40-50 percent light transmission is plenty of light to fill up a room."

In addition, because these architects like designing with glass, they want lots of it. Among the most common questions Dolan hears from the architects is: "What's the biggest piece of glass that you can make?"

"I wish they had a better feel for sizes, especially when it comes to oversize lites," Perilstein says of the architects with whom he works. "The oversize can be done, but it's not simple and easy and can't be treated like the rest of the job."

In some cases, an architect's all-glass vision may ignore ways for supporting that big piece.

"A lot of time architects love to see 20-, 26-foot curtainwalls at their main entrances but they expect them to just sit there and not have any mid-span anchors," Delise says. "So we tell them, 'look, you're going to have to add a horizontal piece of steel or you're going to need to go with this deeper member.' We'll work on these details prior to them submitting it and finding out that they have to add the steel—because by then, usually, the owner has seen the drawings and they expect, for example, a lobby with no horizontal steel. Then the architect looks bad and it becomes a problem."

Delise recalls one job in particular. "We had a project two years ago," he says, "where they drew these big, huge lites of glass for a courthouse and the drawings come out to bid and we had to say you can't get the glass this big—they can't coat it."

Delise found himself explaining to the architect the limitations of the low-E coating in that it simply couldn't be provided on lites as big as the client was looking for.

"Now you're changing the whole design of the building because you have to add vertical mul-

lions or you have to have something different. A lot of that can be worked out right while the job is being drawn by the architect..." Delise says. And speaking of coatings, that's another misconception that Dolan often sees.

"All low-E is not created equal," he says. "There are huge differences in performance in low-E glass and yet the cost difference between different options are very slight." Architects are embracing low-E, but aren't necessarily up to speed on the differences among the high-performance coatings in this group.

### Allowing for the Codes

Now if the glass is properly being used to provide that greater dependence on natural daylighting over artificial lighting—how does that meet the local codes?

"I think there's a gross misconception of what glass needs to be specified where based on codes," Meiries says, pointing specifically to energy requirements. "Right now I think the big concern is definitely what's going to happen once all the states are up-to-date with the energy codes."

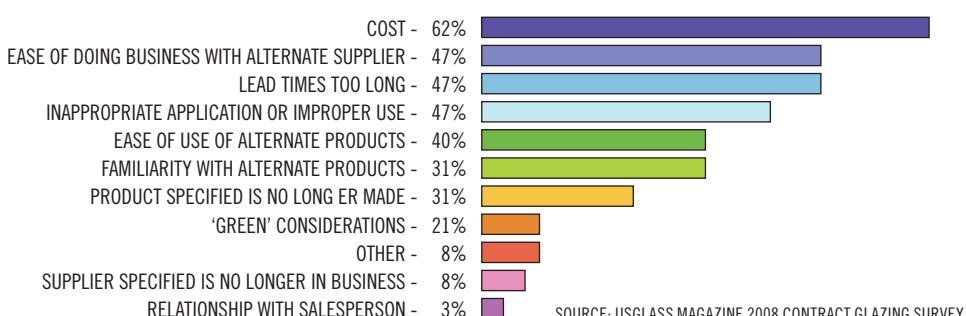
Burnett has heard that concern echoed by the architects he advises. "I think the energy standards is the biggest question that we get," he says. "They have a project where they want to use a large percentage of glass, and the amount of glass then drives the overall energy standards for that building. And this is a whole building analysis, the vision glass is a part of the problem and the spandrel product, and the combination of all of those products will then define the energy ratings for that glass."

Burnett adds, "This is primarily an issue in the northern climates; I think it's less of a problem in some markets. In Seattle energy standards are a large driving factor."

It's also a California thing, as Hale says that with the state's Title 24 code requirements, energy is a recurring concern. "The repeated question is 'What are the performance characteristics of the low-E glass?'" he says. Hale typically points the architects with those questions to a manufacturer "so they can get a better feel for the two things that are important for Title 24 ... the solar heat gain coefficient and U-value."

Ok, maybe it's an all-over thing. As Meiries, who lives in Oklahoma, notes, "Where I live there are no [energy] codes, and that's been the big hot topic the last couple of years." He says

### TOP REASONS GLAZIERS ASK TO HAVE A SPEC CHANGED AND/OR AN 'EQUAL' PRODUCT USED:



SOURCE: USGLASS MAGAZINE 2008 CONTRACT GLAZING SURVEY

# A Clear Vision

by DONNA KACMAR, FAIA





**PROJECT** Cullen Eye Institute, Houston

**CLIENT** Baylor College of Medicine

**ARCHITECT** Kirksey

**DESIGN TEAM** David McLemore, AIA; Will Turner; Bob Inaba, AIA; Avian Caruso, AIA; Susan Musngi; Sophia Malik, AIA

**CONTRACTOR** Tellepsen Builders

**CONSULTANTS** Haynes Whaley Associates (structural); Smith Seckman Reid (MEPF); The Office of James Burnett (landscape); Walter P Moore (civil); Mazzetti Nash Lipsey Burch (medical equipment); Marasco & Associates (ophthalmic)

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Aker/Zvonkovic

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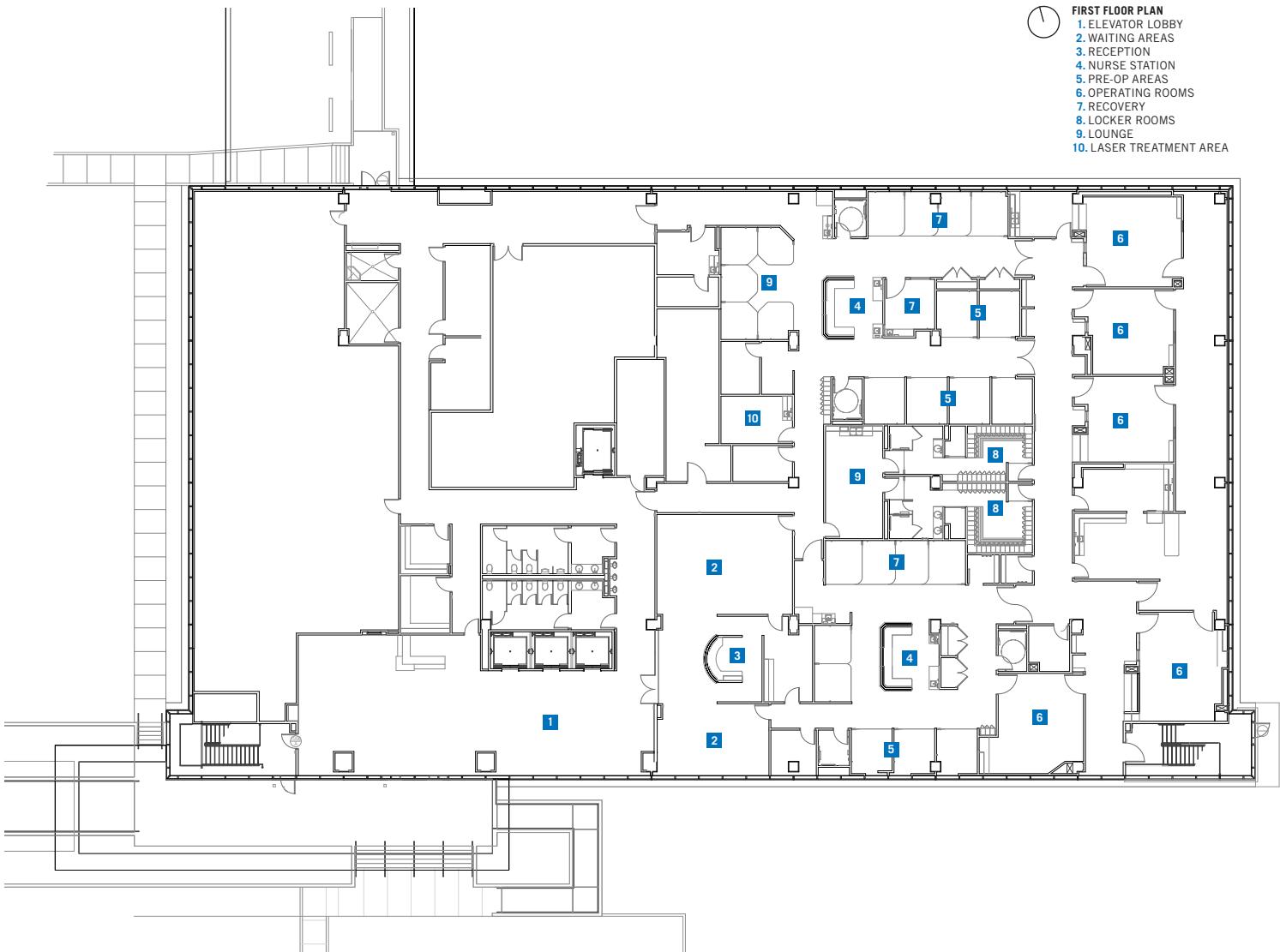
THE NEW CULLEN EYE INSTITUTE IN THE MEDICAL BUILDING OF BAYLOR COLLEGE of Medicine in the Texas Medical Center combines multiple adult ophthalmology subspecialties under one roof. Dr. Dan B. Jones, chair of the Ophthalmology Department at Baylor, recognized the need to consolidate the existing adult ophthalmology practice into a single building on the new McNair Campus. The 165,000-sf, six-story building, completed in Fall of 2008, orients itself towards the future Baylor clinic and hospital, designed by HOK, that is currently under construction to the south of the Eye Institute. Kirksey, the architect of the Eye Institute, worked with the landscape architect, The Office of James Burnett, to visually connect the building towards the Baylor campus and developed a rich landscaped space between the two. The initial landscape schemes were reduced considerably in the construction phase but the strong visual connection remains. The design team also worked with Baylor's staff arborist to test several parking and patient drop-off schemes to find the best way to work around the healthy live oaks that existed on the site.

The building is wrapped on all sides by glass—the façade is more typical of an office building than a hospital or medical building where patient privacy typically dictates a solid wall with punched openings for windows. The final floor plan diagram and placement of the programmatic functions helped balance the conflicting desire for patient privacy while also allowing for abundant daylighting within the public spaces and views to the trees and the campus beyond.



(preceding spread, left to right) The Cullen Eye Institute's glass skin maximizes visibility and daylight. The design provides for patient privacy through a unique doughnut arrangement, allowing patients and care providers separate space for efficiency.

(this spread, clockwise from top left) The orientation of space allows for a variety of brightness levels in waiting areas. The design of the fire stairs demonstrates the designer's commitment to the overall project scheme; the beams of the stairwell are cantilevered to further the visual connection to the larger campus to the south. Patient waiting areas are fingered between the examination spaces, reducing the amount of space required for hallway circulation.





The main circulation space and reception area are located along the south side of the building on each floor. The elevator core was pushed to the south to allow a typical “Baylor Clinic Module” to fit behind the elevators, main circulation zone, and fire stairs.

Natural light washes into the south-facing circulation zones. The patient waiting areas are oriented perpendicular to the south-facing glass, allowing for a variety of light levels in the waiting areas across the depth of the space. The daylight is complemented by the interior surface treatments which bring warmth to the space and help to orient the visitor.

The staff work areas are located along the perimeter on the east, west, and north sides of the building. Patients enter the exam rooms from the centrally located waiting areas while doctors enter the exam rooms from the periphery staff zone. The outer ring of staff space provides daylit work areas for the clinical staff. This encircling doughnut space also allows the staff to confer about patients in a separate work zone and prepare for each visit.

The organization of the exam, testing, measurement, surgery, and support areas is divided into six separate sub-specialty areas. The architects worked closely with the medical team to develop a matrix of the required proximity of shared equipment to develop an efficient interior layout.

Glass, used almost exclusively on the exterior, is also used on the interior of the building. A custom-painted glass lines the interior of the elevator cab. The private consultation areas have clear glass for acoustic privacy while still allowing natural light and views. The interview rooms and divisions between wait areas and staff areas have sand-blasted glass partitions that allow light to pass through while providing visual privacy.

Selecting the exterior glass was a collaborative affair between the Kirksey team and the design team from HOK who were working on the new Baylor hospital building. They wanted the glass to be complementary and unique in both buildings even though they were on different timeframes and the work was being done by different architectural firms.

Kirksey worked with Viracon Glass to develop the glass system. Since having maximum visibility to the rest of the campus and allowing maximum daylight was so important, the project required glazing materials that balanced reflective qualities with visible light transmittance. Kirksey also worked on the energy model with Smith Seckman Reid to test several types of glass: they mixed and matched different coating systems to achieve the desired efficiency. In the stairwells they used an insulated glass unit with a low-iron, ultra-clear outer lite with a low-E coating on the second surface in conjunction with a clear inner lite. The combination of materials and colors produced an energy-efficient unit while still providing a high degree of transparency that maximizes visibility in the heavily used vertical circulation areas. The main facade is primarily clad in an insulated unit also comprised of a low-iron, ultra-clear outer lite with a low-E coating on the second surface, which provided a moderate level of reflectivity. This unit balanced the need for visual connectivity to the campus with the need to reduce glare for the patient areas. A third glass was used, similar to the primary glass but slightly modified to have a simulated sandblast coating on the third surface of the insulated unit. This glazing type allowed for visual screening of specific areas, such as equipment sterilization services, from the exterior, while still providing diffused natural light for staff and patients.

The Kirksey design team successfully balanced energy efficiency, sophisticated client requirements, and ample daylight and visual connections to the exterior in this new glass-wrapped Eye Institute.

Donna Kacmar, FAIA, is principal of architect *works*, inc. in Houston and is an associate professor at the University of Houston.

that area architects are paying attention to the push for energy efficiency and codes in other states and as a result, "There are a tremendous amount of questions about what's driving the glass coatings and where's it going to go in the future."

As energy codes are instituted in more localities, it will become a concern for architects all over, and a point on which glaziers will need to be ready to inform their clients.

"The codes change from one municipality to the next so we often have to assist," Burnett says, "so if there's a specific energy factor on their project then we need to support that with a product that will meet that performance—and often that may be in conflict with what their preferred aesthetic might be."

### Know Your Costs

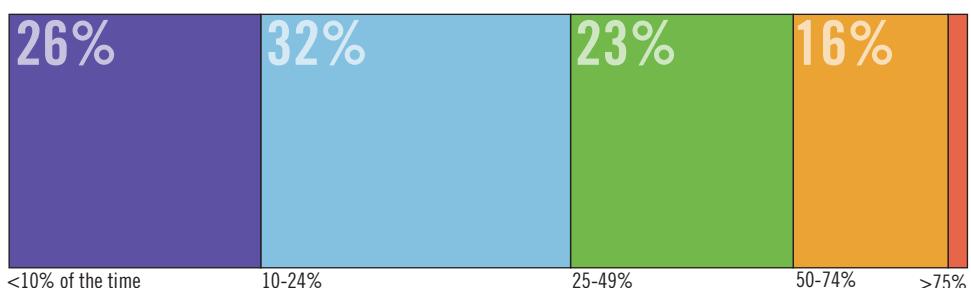
There are some common misconceptions that architects can be better briefed on to keep the bid process low. Delise points to misunderstandings with square-foot minimums as another costly hold-up in the spec process.

"A lot of times architects will draw little lites of glass and they don't realize that there's, say, a 7- or 10-square-foot minimum. That adds extra costs to the job," Delise says. Actually, by assisting in the design process upfront, glazing contractors can help reduce the number of revisions to drawings, helping to lower costs.

To limit such surprise costs, countless glazing contractors now become involved early on in the schematics work.

Vic Cornellier, president of TSI Exterior Wall Systems, a glazing contractor in Landover, Md., does design-assist work. According to Cornellier, that demands not only guiding the client through the product choices but also the budget.

### HOW OFTEN DOES AN ARCHITECT / SPECIFIER SPEC INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL FOR AN INSTALLATION?



SOURCE: USGLASS MAGAZINE 2008 CONTRACT GLAZING SURVEY

### Design Assistance and Product Education

Requesting design-assist services is something that Delise wishes more architects would do. Not only does it prevent changes and problems down the road, but it also helps the contractor and supplier build a relationship with that architect.

Another way to help prevent such problems is to help educate architects about the glass products available.

Most manufacturers offer educational programs or tools for architects including AIA educational programs, online tools with product performance charts, online training programs and webinars, as well as lunch-and-learns.

Now, with slow times being forecasted across the board, finding ways to help the architect early in the game—and reduce their spending—can help build valuable relationships.

"Even in this market, we're still doing and attending a lot of the design-assist meetings," Cornellier says. "You find the developers in the private sector are still trying to get projects ready so that when this economic freeze that we're in thaws out they're ready with product to put online rather than waiting until everything

frees up and then start the design. And that's keeping architects busy right now."

And as Meiries notes, "The better information and knowledge [the architects] have, it just means the cleaner the specification is going to be when it comes out and hits the glazing contractor."

Megan Headley is editor of *USGlass*. (c) 2009. All rights reserved by *USGlass* magazine. For more information, visit [www.usglassmag.com](http://www.usglassmag.com).



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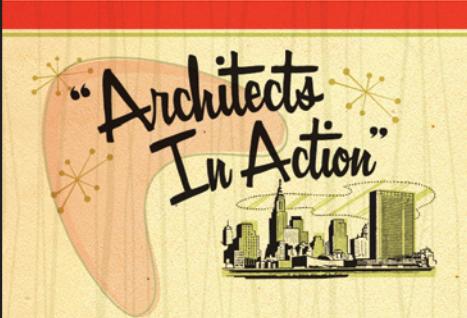
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Flippen and Hugh Prather from 1907 until it was built out in the 1930s; University Park is an amalgam of separately developed subdivisions, many of them improved with housing built speculatively, where the most intensive development occurred in the second half of the 1930s as Dallas' economy began to recover from the Great Depression.

McAlester interprets real estate chronology as social history. Her rich knowledge of Dallas makes her chapters on the formation of both communities compelling because she links historical phenomena and events with particular actors, rather than writing only in broad generalities or focusing exclusively on personalities. She continues her historical account into the present to critically consider the lack of historic preservation policies in both of the separately incorporated communities and the detrimental effects of overbearing new construction on the communities' landscapes.

Winters (a *TA* contributing editor) profiles 19 Dallas architects who were especially active in the Park Cities and compiles short chapters on four special topics—contributions by architects from outside Dallas, the architect-builder teams responsible for much of the speculatively built housing of the 1930s, the revival of neo-traditional architecture at the turn of the twenty-first century, and contemporary modern architecture in the two communities.

Winters's entries on individual architects briefly chronicle their lives and careers, and then profile their representative houses in Highland Park and University Park. In addition to such well known figures as H.B. Thomson, Anton F. Korn, Jr., Fooshee & Cheek, David R. Williams, Charles S. Dilbeck, O'Neil Ford, and Frank D. Welch, Winters identifies the houses of architects better known for their non-residential work (Herbert M. Greene, C.D. Hill, and George L. Dahl) and architects whose names are no longer so familiar (among them Jon D. Carsey, George Marble, and Fonzie Robertson). The photographs accompanying these profiles also provide a visual sense of changing typologies, from the country houses of the 1910s, '20s, and '30s, to the ranch houses of the '30s, '40s, and '50s, to the re-emergence of the opulent period house, often at outsized scale, in the 1990s. Winters is careful to draw attention to the modern architects active in the Park Cities – Ford and Welch, as well as Howard R. Meyer, Enslie Ogelsby, Michael Malone, Dan Shipley, Gary Cunningham, Lionel Morrison, and Sharon Odum – to implicitly assert that modern architecture is as much a part of the cultural legacy of these communities as are houses based on historical models.

Scattered throughout the book are sidebar insertions by Mackintosh on topics that do not fit neatly into McAlester's and Winters's sections. In truth, the social history of Highland Park and University Park deserves a book of its own; it would be fascinating were Mackintosh to write it. The book also includes an extraordinary list of 1,400 houses in the Park Cities, organized by street address, that documents dates of construction and architects. Drawn from existing public records, this is an exceptionally valuable resource, as anyone who has tried to research such information will appreciate. One complaint about this otherwise exemplary book involves the color printing of Clicque's photographs. The color reproduction makes too many of the photographs look like hand-tinted postcards. As a result, houses with textured masonry exteriors appear almost candied.

Texas cities that experienced prosperity in the 1910s and 1920s – and in the 1930s where oil and gas discoveries renewed that prosperity – have their own counterparts to Dallas' Park Cities. One hopes that other civic groups, such as the Friends of the Highland Park Public Library, which

underwrote production of this book to mark the library's 75th anniversary, will promote documentation of their cities' garden suburban neighborhoods, architecture, and architects. With *The Homes of the Park Cities, Dallas*, McAlester, Winters, Mackintosh, and Clicque provide an admirable model that should inspire others to follow suit.

A *TA* contributing editor, Fox is also a Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.



(top) One of the first homes built in University Park was 3921 University Boulevard, completed in 1923 in the Prairie style. (bottom) Finished in 1939 in Highland Park, the house at 4656 Southern Avenue was designed by architect James E. Duff.

by two cables in tension. Upper members do not touch and are free to sway in the wind.

**MET Retail** by Studio 8 Architects anchors the entrance to a mixed-use development whose site and program had to address an adjacent gas pipeline and maintain views to downtown Austin. Protection from the pipeline is provided with the design of a fire-rated blast wing wall constructed of board-formed concrete with randomly placed glass-block inserts.

**Oasis Advertising Agency** by Specht Harpman is a national headquarters located in an industrial loft building in New York City's garment district. The design team introduced exhaust louvers into the interior spaces as operable privacy screens at workstations and to create a light fixture at the reception area. Luminous blue panels provide a highly textured and colored entry lobby and also create a recognizable path along the interior circulation.

**Tower House** by Andersson Wise Architects is a free standing addition to a 1930s limestone cabin on Lake Travis. Rather than add onto the old cabin, the architects chose to open it up inside and locate the new sleeping quarters in the separate tower's first and second floors. A third-level terrace opens to a panorama of the lake and distant rolling hills.

**Trail Restroom** by Miró Rivera Architects is the first public restroom built for the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail in over 30 years and was conceived as a sculpture in the park.



Tower House



Trail Restroom



U.P., Ultimate Pulse

The restroom consists of 49 3/4"-thick vertical weathering steel plates that vary in width and height to control views and allow penetrating light and fresh air into the restroom.

**Travis Heights Arts Studio** by Clayton Levy Little Architects is a new 500-sf structure that serves as a combined art studio and garden shed with adjacent carport. The little box deftly absorbs the spirit of its neighboring landmark Victorian house and recalls southern historic precedents in its geometry and proportions. Wood shingles and siding complement the materials of the main house and the metal roof provides rainwater collection.

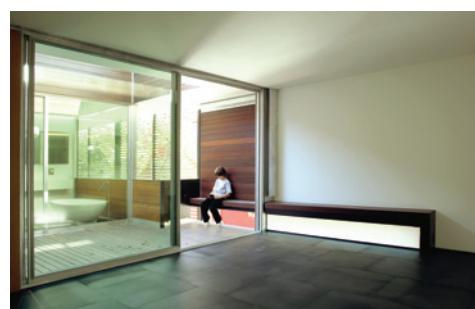
**U.P., Ultimate Pulse**, by Legge Lewis Legge was commissioned by First Night Austin 2008 for the city's New Year's Eve celebration. Constructed of 1,000 readymade "Flashflight" LED Frisbees, the 35-foot temporary structure formed a serene and contemplative respite during the revelry leading up to the end of the year. Each disk,



MET Retail



Trail Restroom



Wolfe Den

embedded with its own battery, LED and chip, pulsed through random color cycles.

**Wolfe Den** by M.J. Neal Architects is a 2,400-sf house consisting of a simple rectangle along one side of the lot and an adjacent courtyard. The configuration provides privacy from the street while opening the interior living areas onto its decks and garden. An overhang with lattice provides the transition to the garden and protection from the west sun. The construction of the house implements many green methodologies and material selections.

The jury also recognized one project with a Studio Award—the **Chimeric Project** by James Haynes and Patrick Winn, students at the UT Austin School of Architecture. An experimental space, the form evolved over an independent design studio. The synthesis of the design studies was exhibited in the school's Mebane Gallery.

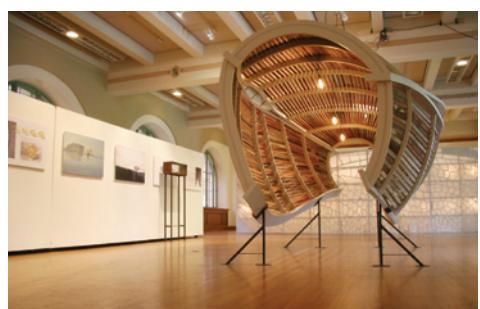
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Travis Heights Arts Studio



Chimeric Project



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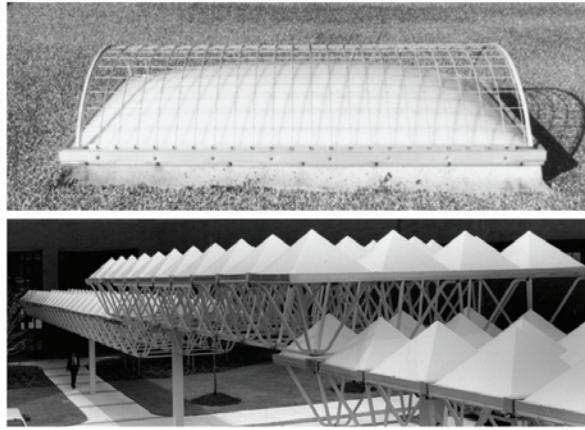
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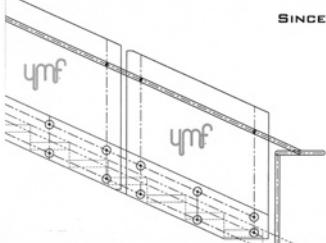
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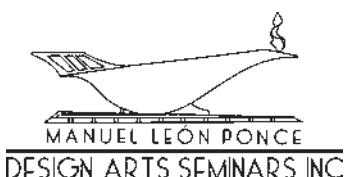
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## SWA Group Honored with ASLA Awards

The American Society of Landscape Architects selected 49 projects for recognition for its 2009 Professional Awards. Houston-based firm SWA Group was the only Texas firm to be honored and won both the Award of Excellence for the general design category and the Honor Award for analysis and planning category for its work on the Buffalo Bayou Promenade, Houston. For a complete list of winning projects, visit [www.asla.org/2009awards](http://www.asla.org/2009awards).

## Texas Firms Among 'ARCHITECT 50'

The May 2009 edition of *ARCHITECT* magazine included three Dallas-area firms in its list of the top 50 architectural firms in the U.S. The firms are Good Fulton & Farrell (ranked at #17) and HKS (#42), both in Dallas, and SHW Group (#36) in Plano. The magazine inaugurated the *ARCHITECT 50* ranking this year, using a scoring system based on the following criteria—proficiency, sustainability, and design quality. A complete list of the *ARCHITECT 50* firms is posted at [www.architectmagazine.com](http://www.architectmagazine.com).

## THC Recognizes Historic Fort Worth

The Texas Historical Commission honored Historic Fort Worth with the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation on June 9 at a reception at the Texas State Capitol. The award is THC's highest preservation honor and was created to recognize the outstanding achievement of an individual or organization in preserving Texas' prehistoric and historic heritage. Access additional information on Historic Fort Worth at [www.historicfortworth.org](http://www.historicfortworth.org). To learn more about the Governor's Award, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).

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# Living Laboratory

Spirits of Thoreau and Corbu guide students on cabin project

by URS PETER FLUECKIGER

AS OUR PLANET'S RESERVES OF WATER AND ENERGY SOURCES become increasingly limited, architects must develop forms of architecture that incorporate – even celebrate – sustainability design practices. Toward that end, my students at Texas Tech University are engaged in an ongoing project that focuses on a variety of solutions. The result is a living laboratory designed for the harsh microclimate of Foard County about 45 miles west of Wichita Falls.

This project proposes to construct a prefabricated dwelling as a model of sustainability, a laboratory to test and quantify sustainable architectural concepts. For example, the performance of a solar panel will be tested and measured, and the data collected will be compared to the performance of competing products. In that way the Prefabricated Dwelling as a laboratory will produce data on sustainable components, materials, and water harvesting technology that will help future architects to make crucial and lucrative design decisions and help them to envision how to retrofit existing homes with sustainable technology.

Historical precedents for this project are the cabin Henry David Thoreau erected at Walden Pond near Concord, Mass., and Le Corbusier's "Cabanon" at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin in southern France. Both projects are studies of the minimal spatial needs for living. Furthermore, they are examples of structures that successfully relate to their sites and to specific environmental conditions. Both projects were built under significant budget constraints, which are seldom considered in the design studios of our architecture schools.



Thoreau was particularly mindful of the cost of the shelter that he built for himself, going as far as to document the price of all his materials. Beyond reminding us of the cost – both financial and environmental – of our marks upon the landscape, Thoreau's experience offers the lesson of knowing the value of building with one's own hands. At Texas Tech, the Design Build studio requires students to learn about the strength and resistance of a particular material, the requirements of tectonics, and structural integrity. For two semesters they've exchanged the computer and the mouse for the nail and the hammer.

*The project is supported by a grant from the Texas Tech University Research Enrichment Fund and through the generosity of Fred Koch of the Pease River Foundation; F. Marie Hall; John Dea of Dea Doors and Windows; Mike Harendt of MBCI Metal Buildings; Rex Neitsch of EcoBlue; and Larry Harvey, AIA, of Chapman Harvey Architects.*

Flueckiger is an associate professor in the College of Architecture at Texas Tech University.



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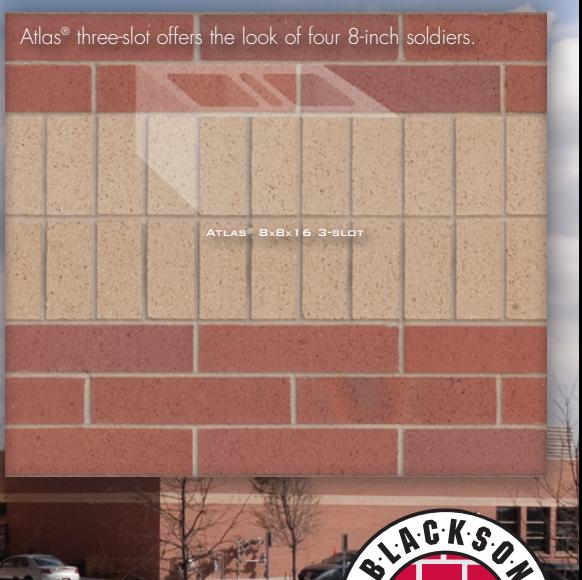
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